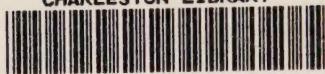


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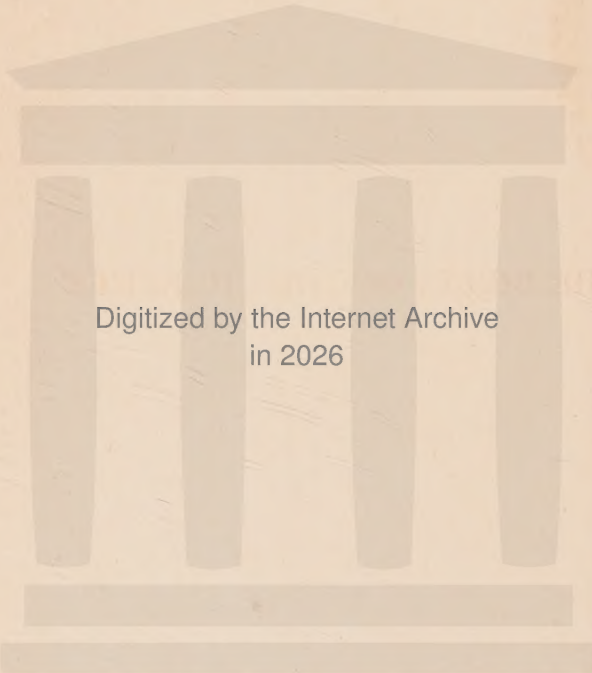
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THE BIBLES OF THE CHURCHES

THE BIBLES OF THE CHURCHES

BY
ANDREW SLEDD, PH.D. (YALE)

PROFESSOR OF GREEK AND NEW TESTAMENT LITERATURE
IN EMORY UNIVERSITY



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INTRODUCTION

WE have had the Bible so long that it is hard for us to realize that there was ever a time when the Book did not exist. And we have so revered it in its present form, even in some particular version, that we are prone to forget that it ever had another form or a different version. In consequence, regard for the form sometimes impairs the great idea, and the Bible becomes a new "handwriting in ordinances that is against us" rather than the unfolding record of a great redemptive movement that still flows on toward its realization in the Kingdom of God.

But the Bible is, in fact, the result of the long and gradual accumulation of the literature of a great religious movement, and it represents various stages of conservation and organization within that movement. Our sacred literature was not all produced at a single stroke, but rather here a little and there a little through a period of a thousand years or more. And its collection did not wait upon the production of the last book that it should ultimately contain, but the Bible itself grew through processes of accretion as its literature was created and collected through the years. But the process never issued in complete uniformity; for there has not yet come a time when all who have and revere a Bible have and revere just the same Bible.

The present book is written to spread the knowledge of these significant facts, and its purpose is purely constructive. The writer has from childhood been deeply devoted to the Scriptures, but he knows from experience

that, with all reverent regard, the Book may still be the letter that killeth rather than the channel of the Spirit that giveth life. And he hopes that the story of the growing Book and of the crystallizations within that growth may promote the personal realization of how vitally God deals with men, clarify the differences between the forces that produced the literature and the forces that collected and canonized it, and quicken the sense of a Presence that has never been withdrawn and of a Love that has never wearied.

The book has small claim to originality, and it would be too much to hope that it is altogether free from errors. Specific quotations have, of course, been duly indicated, but behind them is a broad obligation to many masters which can only be acknowledged, as it is here, in general and grateful terms. And yet the book is not a servile reproduction; and the writer ventures to hope that, in spite of errors that it may contain, it is a sufficiently accurate account of the course of events, and sufficiently different from the other books, to justify its existence.

ANDREW SLEDD.

CHAPTER I

BUYING A BIBLE

If a stranger should enter a great Bible House and express his desire to "buy a Bible," such an apparently simple request would bring to light a whole series of interesting, important, and rather startling questions. The clerk would have to have more specific information before he could serve the purchaser with intelligence and acceptability; and no superficial specifications, such as the kind of paper wanted, the binding, or the size of the print, would be sufficient. The purchaser would have to give more specific and much more significant description of the Bible that he wanted; for there would be before him many Bibles, in different languages, in different versions, with different contents, and with different sanctions, and he would have to make his choice in view of all these differences.

If the Book is for the buyer's own household, and their mother tongue is English, the buyer will choose an English Bible; for, unless the book is to be a mere talisman or fetish, he must have a Bible that he and his can read. Here, then, because of the necessities of the case, since the Bible was originally written in languages that he and his do not understand, the purchaser must choose a special derivative in place of the original; and this derivative is late and has its own complex history. But such an

initial choice itself involves its own important presumptions:

1. That all English Bibles are derived from the same original, which is both single and correct; and

2. That one and only one English translation correctly represents this original, not only in contents, but in words and their arrangements, and even in those devices that may affect the meaning, such as chapters and verses, paragraphs, capitals, and punctuation.

But, as a matter of fact, all English Bibles are not derived from the same original; for there is no single original of which all may or must say that it alone is the single and correct original. And so English Bibles vary, both in contents and in translation, partly because of different originals from which they have been derived, and partly because, where the original is the same, it is susceptible of different translations. Hence it is not enough for one to say that he desires "the English Bible." He must still choose among differing English Bibles, and decide which of these, since he may not have them all, he will have for his own.

"Here," says the clerk, then, "are our most popular English Bibles; and we can give you any of them in several sizes and bindings;" and he lays out before the purchaser,

"The Holy Scriptures" of the Jewish Publication Society;

"The Douai Bible," the approved English translation of the Roman Catholic Bible;

"The Baptist Bible," put forth by the Baptist Publication Society;

"The Authorized, or King James', Version";

"The Revised Version," in two forms, the English and the American Revision;

"Moffatt's New Translation," and perhaps others.

If the prospective purchaser is a Christian, he will reject the Jewish Bible, because it is Jewish and so

does not contain a New Testament. He

The Jewish Bible?

does not knowingly reject the Jewish Bible

as far as it goes: he rejects it because for him,

as a Christian, it does not go far enough. The Christian's Bible must have a New Testament as well as an Old; but the Jewish Bible contains an Old Testament only.

A little more careful scrutiny, however, would show that, even in the Old Testament, the Jewish Bible is not identical with the Christian. It contains the same thirty-nine books; but their arrangement and classification, and their evaluation, are different. As the Preface says, "It has a character of its own;" and that character is confessedly and proudly Jewish. "The repeated efforts by Jews in the field of Biblical translation," the Preface continues, "show their sentiment toward translations prepared by other denominations. The dominant feature of this sentiment, *apart from the thought that the Christological interpretations in non-Jewish translations are out of place in a Jewish Bible* (italics ours), is and was that the Jew cannot afford to have his Bible translation prepared for him by others."

One would expect to find, then, that the broad difference between Jew and Christian, indicated in the presence or absence of a New Testament, would appear also in the Old Testament which they seem to have in

common. And it is just in that field of "the Christological interpretations" that the differences between (and within) the two are most marked. There are numerous cases like these:

"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; *they* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *their* heel," one reads in the Jewish Old Testament in Genesis 3: 15. But our Christian Old Testament reads "*he*" and "*his*" in place of "they" and "theirs," involving, in an apparently small change, very considerable differences of interpretation of the passage.

"Behold, the young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" is the Jewish translation of Isaiah 7: 14; where the Christian Old Testament reads "a virgin shall conceive."

Broadly speaking, these differences go back to the earliest times and were matters of dispute between Jews and Christians from the beginning of the new faith. They are adduced here merely to show that it is not simply the lack of a New Testament that leads the Christian purchaser to put aside the Jewish Bible. Even in the parts that are in general common to the Jewish and the Christian Bibles, he will not accept the Jewish form. For that translation seems to him erroneous, if not worse than erroneous. And thus his choice here involves both the number of books that his Bible must contain and some of the contents of those books; and he passes an adverse judgment on the Jewish Bible in both these vital particulars. *Because he is a Christian*, he will choose a Christian Bible, with an Old Testament differ-

ent from the Jewish, and a New Testament in addition to the Old.

But all Christian Bibles are not the same, either in the number of their books or in their translations, so that it will not be enough for our purchaser to say that he wants a Christian Bible. He must make a further choice among them.

**The Roman
Catholic
Bible?**

If he be a Protestant, he will reject the Catholic Bible, not because, as in the Jewish Bible, it contains too little, but because it contains too much. For this Catholic Bible contains in its Old Testament certain whole books—*i.e.*, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom (of Solomon), Ecclesiasticus, 1 and 2 Maccabees, and certain large additions to other books, *i.e.*, to Jeremiah, to Esther, and to Daniel, that do not appear at all in the Protestant Bible; and the Protestant purchaser, if he is strictly Protestant, does not recognize this surplus as Scripture, and does not want it in his Book.

Nor would he be favorably disposed to such translations as “Do penance,” or to the polemical notes that stigmatize his Church as heretical and its founders as Antichrist. In fact, he will have none of these things—books, translations, notes—that have the full sanction of the Romish Church and that his Catholic Christian friend reverently regards as belonging in, or properly interpreting, the Sacred Scriptures. *Because he is a Protestant*, he will choose a Bible different from the Roman Catholic both in contents and in interpretation.

By these two choices the number of books that the Protestant Christian Bible must contain has been

brought to light. It must contain more books than the Jewish, and fewer books than the Catholic Bible. Interestingly enough, it must contain in the Old Testament the same number of books, and, apparently, the same books, that the Jewish Bible contains; and to these it must add a New Testament of the same books that the Catholic Bible contains. But in neither case does it show the same translation and interpretation of these books.

This assumes, of course, that the purchaser is a rather emphatic Protestant, of the Puritan or Presbyterian succession. If he is a High Churchman, for example, an Anglo-Catholic, he

**Protestant Bibles:
Which One?** will by no means assent to this total exclusion of the books that the Romish Canon contains over and above those of the strongly Protestant Canon. And the status of those books might vary anywhere between the Romish position of their full canonicity and the opposite extreme of their complete repudiation.

Many Anglo-Catholics, in the English Church, and elsewhere, take the full Romish position in this matter, and maintain that these books are just as

High or Low Church? fully Sacred Scripture as any of the other books. The official position of the English Church, however, includes these books in the Bible, but on a distinctly lower level than the rest of the books: they are "ecclesiastical," but not canonical. The sixth Article of Religion of the Anglican Church states its position:

"And the other books (as Hierome, *i.e.*, Jerome,

saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following: The Third Book of Esdras, The Fourth Book of Esdras, The Book of Tobias, The Book of Judith, The Rest of the Book of Esther, The Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach (*i.e.*, Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Sirach), Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Story of Susanna, of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees.”¹

But even this partial recognition has not been acceptable to the more radical Protestants. Their view is that expressed in the Westminster Confession: “The books commonly called Apocrypha (*i.e.*, those just enumerated), not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings.”

There are thus in Protestant—or, perhaps, it would be better to say, in non-Roman—circles three general views with the regard to these books. In one view, they are full canonical Scripture, as they are in the

¹*Third and Fourth Esdras* and *The Prayer of Manasses* appear as an Appendix to the Scriptures in the Romish Vulgate but are not regarded as canonical. *The Rest of the Book of Esther* is included in the Romish *Esther*. *Baruch* is coupled with *Jeremiah*; *The Song of the Three Children*, *The Story of Susanna*, and *Bel and the Dragon* are included in the Romish *Daniel*; and all these, together with the rest of the books enumerated in this English article are regarded by the Roman Church as full canonical Scripture.

Romish Church; in another, they are near-Scripture, not canonical, and yet included in the Bible and used in the public services of the Church "for example of life and instruction of manners;" while in the third view they are not Scripture in any sense, but are merely "human writings."

The last view is the most general in Protestant circles to-day; and for its adherents these books have not only ceased to be in the Scriptures but they have practically ceased to exist. We may therefore say that for Protestants in general the Canon of the Old Testament contains, without any qualifications, just thirty-nine books. In the case of the New Testament, the Canon now contains, for both Romanists and Protestants, just twenty-seven, and the same twenty-seven, books. Our Protestant purchaser, then, would want a Bible containing sixty-six books, no more and no less.

But there are still differences within these books. For Protestant Bibles, though thus reduced to a numerical uniformity, do not all have the same contents in the several books. Hence the prospective purchaser of a Bible must still make a further choice in view of these internal variations.

"Here," says the salesman, "is a copy of the Bible issued by the Baptist Publication Society. It embodies in the text their doctrine of immersion. See here." And he shows the word "immersion" printed in brackets after the word "baptism" wherever that word occurs; and points out in the Preface the instruction to the reader to use either

**The Baptist
Bible?**

word in his reading, since the meaning is the same in either case.

If the purchaser does not accept, or does not much stress, this doctrine of baptism, he will pass this Bible by in favor of one of less specific denominational color and of more general use. And in so doing he will pass a more or less specific judgment upon the doctrine of baptism that this translation is designed to maintain. He prefers that his Bible shall not specify the mode of baptism, thus committing itself, and the believing reader also, to one side of a controverted issue. Just as he will not have the Jewish Old Testament because it does not contain the Messianic passages in which he believes, so he will not have the Baptist Bible because it contains a doctrine of baptism in which, perhaps, he does not believe. *Because he is a Christian*, as we have said, he will not have the Jewish Old Testament; and now, *because he is not a Baptist*, he will not have the Baptist Bible.

"This is one of the latest things in Bibles," then says the clerk, picking up Moffatt's New Translation. "It is highly spoken of and is having an extensive sale."

Moffatt's New
Translation?

"What sort of sanction has it?"

"It has the sanction of quite excellent scholarship. It is a careful translation of the Hebrew and the Greek into modern English."

"I did not mean that. Has it been approved or adopted for general use by any Church or Churches? Is it the work of any authorized group of scholars, or is it the private work of a single man?"

"Why, it is Dr. Moffatt's own work, I understand; and has no official sanction."

The purchaser turns the leaves of the Bible in his hands. "Joseph begat Jesus," he reads. "This," he says to the clerk, "does not seem familiar. I believe I prefer a more representative Bible, the work of a group of scholars rather than of a single man, and with some sort of recognition and use among our Christian Churches."

What the purchaser really wants is a standard, *the* standard—Protestant English Bible, recognized and used as such by all English-speaking Protestants. But since Protestantism was never a unitary organization, it has no common official definition even of the contents of its Bible; though the several Protestant groups have, in this matter, reached a common goal, so that we may say (with slight modifications) that all Protestants have the same number of books in their Bible. But in the matter of text and translation, with all that that implies, there is no official Protestant pronouncement, and hence no official and universally accepted Protestant Version.

Had our scene been laid a generation or two ago, the purchaser's problem would have been much more simple.

Then the King James' Version, commonly known as the Authorized Version (A.V.), occupied the field; and the only question would have been whether the purchaser wanted a copy containing the Apocrypha or the common edition that omitted these books. But now another great version has come upon the field to com-

pete with the King James' (K.J.). It, too, is the work of a group of scholars; and its sanctions, except in the matter of age, differ little from those of the older version. But, since this Revised Version (R.V.)² is not identical with the King James', our purchaser must choose between the two. Like the later editions of the King James', the Revised Version omits the Apocryphal books; and so both these versions now contain the same number of books in the Old Testament and in the New. But within these common books they exhibit differences of several sorts.

1. In many cases the R.V. has simply *changed the obsolete language* of the K. J. into terms more intelligible to the modern reader. Thus "ouches of gold" (Ex. 39: 13) becomes the certainly more intelligible "inclosings of gold." "He who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (2 Thes. 2: 7), and, "We do you to wit of the grace of God" (2 Cor. 8: 1), are hardly clear to the unlettered modern reader. Unless he knows that "let" meant "hinder," and "do you to wit of" means "make known to you," he is apt to get no meaning, or the wrong meaning, from these and many similar obsolete words and phrases.

2. In many other cases, however, the R.V. *gives a different sense* from that of the K.J. Thus, in Luke 2: 49, the K.J. says, "how is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

² I ignore the differences between the English and the American forms of the R. V. and speak only of the American Standard Revised Version.

but the R.V. says, "knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" (with a marginal note, "Or 'about my Father's business.' Greek, 'in the things of my Father'"). Again, in 2 Timothy 3:16, we read in the K.J., "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable," etc. But the R.V. says, "Every scripture inspired of God *is* also profitable," etc. (with the note, "Or, 'Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable' "). Finally, the K.J. says "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," but the R. V. says only "The Epistle to the Hebrews." In cases of this sort, not merely the phraseology but the sense is different in the two versions, so that *what the Scriptures say* is involved in the choice between them.

Such differences (ignoring the caption of Hebrews) are due to the indeterminate meaning of the original Hebrew and Greek. When the words of the original may have several different meanings, translators naturally differ as to the exact meaning the writer intended to convey; and the only way to certainty in such a case would be to ask the writer to explain his words. That being now impossible, each translator (or group of translators) has to make his own choice among the different meanings of the words; and the purchaser of that translation will receive a Bible that embodies this decision of the translator.

3. There is yet another group of cases in which *there is an actual difference of contents* in the two versions.

(a) Numerous verses and parts of verses that appear in the K.J. are omitted from the R. V. The translations of the Lord's Prayer will illustrate this as well as the

statements of *No. 2* above. The K. J. says, "Deliver us from evil;" the R.V., "Deliver us from the evil *one*" (with footnote, "Or, 'evil'"). And the K. J. closes the Prayer with the doxology, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"; but these words do not appear at all in the R. V. text, though there is a footnote that says, "Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add" the words.

In 1 John 5: 6-8 we find a case with a peculiarly interesting history. The verses read:

KING JAMES

"This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* And there are three that bear witness *in earth*, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (Italics ours).

REVISED VERSION

"This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one."

Besides smaller variations, the reader will observe the absence from the R. V. of the whole verse concerning the three witnesses in heaven. The words have no manuscript authority, and are simply omitted from modern Greek Testaments, and modern translations. They appear in the K. J. because Erasmus, in reply to criticisms of the first two editions of his Greek Testa-

ment, which did not contain the words, said that he would insert them in subsequent editions if they could be found in a single Greek manuscript. When they were at last produced in a very late manuscript (though undoubtedly a forged insertion in it), Erasmus, though with hesitation, fulfilled his promise and inserted the words in the third edition of his Greek Testament (1522). From this edition William Tindale translated the New Testament into English, and so the words came over into the English New Testament in 1525, and appear in the K. J. as the lineal descendant of Tindale's work. They are omitted in the R. V. and in modern Greek Testaments, because, as a simple matter of fact, they never had any proper place in the New Testament.

Differences of this sort, then, are due to differences in the manuscript from which the translations are made; and the manuscript basis of the R. V. is incomparably superior to that of the K. J. But the purchaser of the K. J. has such verses in his Bible, while the purchaser of the R. V. does not have them.

(*b*) In some cases, the R. V. prints the same matter that appears in the K. J.; but the R. V. indicates by brackets or by notes that this matter is of doubtful standing, while no such indications appear in the older version. This is the case, for instance, with the ending of the Gospel of Mark, and with the story of the woman taken in adultery (Mark 16: 9-20; and John 7: 53-8: 11. In the K. J. the reader has no intimation that these passages are not certainly parts of the sacred text. In the R. V., however, in the case of the ending of Mark, he has this footnote: "The two oldest Greek

manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from verse 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel" (in fact, there are three or four different endings in the manuscripts). In the case of the story of the woman taken in adultery, the R. V. prints the whole passage in square brackets (meaning that it should be omitted), and adds the footnote: "Most of the ancient authorities omit John 7: 53-8: 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other." The reader is thus put on notice that such passages are of uncertain standing.

From all this it will appear that our Protestant purchaser of a Bible, when, by a series of preliminary choices, he has limited his field to the two great English versions now in public use, will still have to choose between these two, and his choice will still involve the passing of a judgment on what is, or what is not, Scripture. He must say, with reference to all the variations between these versions, what shall be in his Bible, with all that that may involve. And thus so apparently simple a matter as the buying of a Bible involves, *not arbitrarily but of necessity*,

(a) The exercise of individual judgment in the selection of one Bible at the expense of something, present or lacking, in any and all other Bibles; and,

A Judgment
Necessary

(b) The recognition and reflection of a whole series of prior judgments, according to which the various Bibles, among which choice must still be made, have been severally defined and constituted.

In the matter of the Canon, the larger contents of the

Bible, one's choice will be determined by his Church affiliation and loyalty. The Jew will choose the Jewish Bible as defined by the Council of Jamnia 91 A.D.; the Romanist will choose the Romish Bible as defined by the Council of Trent in 1546; and the Protestant will choose the Bible as defined by his Protestant group or groups. These choices simply recognize and reflect those earlier judgments by which the Bible of the group has already been defined. The purchaser of a Bible to-day does not go behind those judgments. He accepts them as established and authoritative, the expression of the collective judgment of his Church. By such judgments these Canons have become fixed entities, not individual, but corporate. They are standards, definitive and normative, inextricably integrated with the total life of the Churches; and the individual accepts them as parts of this totality.

Thus the Canon as a whole is now a matter of individual judgment, in practice if not in theory, only as an aspect of the more inclusive judgment on the part of the Church. **2. Scholarship** Churches. Christians will think the Jewish Church in error in its Canon, and the Jews will pass the same judgment on the Christians. Romanists are committed to the proposition that Protestants are wrong, and Protestants are no less certain that the error is on the other side. Individuals in each group may think that the judgment of their Church contains some errors and might be corrected; but there is no serious proposal to make a new Canon, which would be, in effect, to make a new Church. The function of scholarship is

here historical and not creative. It does not contemplate the creation of a new Canon; but devotes itself to the study of the origin, growth, and function of the Canons that the Churches have created and sanctioned and that the individual accepts as an integral part of his particular Church.

But in the matter of the inner differences that have been described, the lesser contents of the Bible, the Protestant purchaser of a Bible has no such easy and convenient recourse to earlier group decisions.³ For English Protestants, at least, there is no official and authoritative English Version. They not only may, but must, exercise an individual and discriminating judgment in this matter; and the sounder and more scholarly the basis of this judgment the more dependable will be its results. And in this necessity the modern buyer of a Bible may see a reminder, feeble, it may be, but profoundly significant, of the rights and responsibilities of those earlier days when men had to do in the large what he still has to do in the little, and determine not what translations or what verses, *but what books*, should be included in the Sacred Scriptures.

³The Roman Catholic situation is different. See below.

CHAPTER II

THE JEWISH BIBLE

THE Jewish Bible is the oldest Bible. Christianity is the child of Judaism, and as a part of its inheritance it took over, with some modifications, the Jewish Scriptures. These for a time, constituted the only Christian Bible; and they were retained as an Old Testament when, after a while, Christianity made up a New Testament of its own distinctive writings. The history of the Jewish Bible is, therefore, the history of the oldest common factor of all Bibles.

The books of the Jewish Bible are divided into three groups: *the law, the prophets, and the writings*. And these groupings indicate:

(a) Different degrees of sanctity and authority. The Law was and is supreme. As the Preface of the English translation says: "Each of these possesses a different degree of holiness or authority. . . . Readings from the third portion of the Bible (*i.e.*, in the synagogue worship), though customary at one time, have now largely fallen into disuse."

(b) Different stages in the long process of the collection and canonization of the literature. As far as the individual books are concerned, this arrangement is not chronological; but it is chronological for the canonization of the respective groups. The Law was canonized first; then, The Prophets; and finally, The Writings.

The production of the literature, of course, preceded its collection into a canon. The former is the creative process, and is largely individual; the latter is conservative, and represents a social reaction to the creations of the past. One set of needs produces the literature; later developments lead to its collection and canonization. And so the Jewish Bible grew, first as a series of individual productions, many of them themselves composite, and representing stages of smaller, separate growth, and then as a series of collections and canonizations of the works of the past.

**Production
and
Canonization**

And these processes overlapped; so that the Canon was formed in several sections, at crucial stages in the national life, while the stream of production was still flowing. The final crisis in the Jewish national life brought the processes of canonization to a close; and the Jews thus came at last to have a fixed Bible, occupying its own unique position in their life and thought, to which nothing could be added and from which nothing could be taken away. And that Bible, in this its final form, is also the Old Testament of Protestant Christians. It marks one point in the stream of production at which, in the view of Jews and Protestants, the product ceased to have a sacred character. For the Romanist the stream ran longer, and his point of fixation was consequently further down its course, and his Old Testament is proportionately larger than that of Jew and Protestant.

(a) *Production.* A considerable body of literature was produced before any of it was canonized. Each

writing for a long time stood on its own merits, and none of the writers was making a conscious contribution to a collection of Sacred Scriptures. The Golden Age of Jewish literature precedes, and includes, the Babylonish captivity. To this earlier period belong:

1. Oral traditions, torah, ballads, 1200-1000 B.C.
2. The Northern and Southern histories¹ (known as E and J);
3. Amos and Hosea, 750-735.
4. Isaiah.
5. Micah.

(*THE DESTRUCTION OF SAMARIA IN 722 B.C.* The great northern tribes here fall out of the record, and later development belongs to the southern tribes, Judah and part of Benjamin.)

6. Nahum, 650.
7. Zephaniah.
8. Deuteronomy discovered in the temple (2 Kings 22: 8), 621.
9. Jeremiah.
10. Habakkuk.
- (*THE EXILE (597, 586-538.)*)
11. Ezekiel.
12. Lamentations.
13. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings¹.

¹Mention should be made of other early books that have disappeared but that are quoted in the later books, such as:

"*The Wars of Jehovah*" (Num. 21: 14);

"*The Book of Jashar*" (Jos. 10: 13; 2 Sam. 1: 18);

"*Chronicles of the Kings of Israel*" (1 Kings 15, 31);

"*Chronicles of the Kings of Judah*" (1 Kings 14: 29).

14. "Second" Isaiah, 540 B.C.

(b) *Canonization*. Near the close of this long period (621 B.C.), Josiah, king of Judah, had undertaken to reform his kingdom on the basis of a prophetic book of the Law, recently discovered in the temple, that was substantially our book of Deuteronomy. The account of this discovery, and of the reforms based on it, will be found in 2 Kings 22: 8-23: 28. Josiah "made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm (or, perform) the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant" (2 Kings 23: 3).

Josiah's reformation had begun before the discovery of the law book: it was the repairing of the temple that brought the book to light. But the discovery of the book both intensified the movement and set a standard for it at once concrete and challenging, a law code instinct with the great prophetic spirit. And the adoption of this book as the authoritative rule of individual and

Canon national life, was the first step toward the canonization of the Jewish Bible. It gave the book official sanction and distinctive standing relative to the community. It established it as a specific, written rule, or norm, for those who would serve and please Jehovah, and set a standard by which good Jews, as the people of the covenant and the worshipers of Jehovah, were to be distinguished and defined. And these are functions of a "canon." "The two significations of the word are, a rule or fundamental principle,

and a collection or list of books that form or contain the rule.”² Both these ideas appear in the account given in Second Kings of the adoption of the Deuteronomic Law.

But Josiah’s reformation did not stop the course of impending judgment upon Judah (2 Kings 23: 26). And a generation later Jerusalem was captured and destroyed, its citizens were carried into exile, and the kingdom of Judah came to an end (586 B.C.).

After about fifty years (539), Cyrus gave the exiles permission to return and reestablish the worship of Jehovah in Jerusalem. But the return was a slow and disappointing process; and it was not until a hundred years later, under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra, that the process finally culminated in the establishment and organization of the Jewish Church-State.

(a) *Production*. The literature of this period is, generally, concerned with the problems of The Return, and embraces:

1. Haggai, and Zechariah, 520 B.C.
2. Psalms, collected, edited, and many composed, 520-150.
3. Malachi.
4. Ruth.
5. Joel, Jonah, Obadiah, Job.
6. The *Pentateuch*, as we now have it, 450-400.

(b) *Canonization*. Nehemiah, under royal sanction, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem (444 B.C.), and left them “as an eternal memorial of himself” (Josephus). The

² Encyclopedia Britannica, Ninth Edition, s. v. “Canon.”

community, thus protected from its hostile neighbors, was then organized and solidified around "the law of God," as described in Nehemiah, chapters 8, 9, and 10. Ezra, "the priest, the scribe," was the leader in this procedure, and so became "the true founder of Judaism."

This code, described as "the law of Moses" and "the law of God," thus became the sacred constitution of the new Jewish Church-State, a Canon of Sacred Scripture, setting forth the relations of God to his chosen people, and his will concerning them, and the Jews henceforth became not only "the people of a Book," but the people of *this* Book. This book was the Law, as that had been worked over and codified during the Exile, and was (probably) substantially identical with our Pentateuch.

Thus about the middle of the fifth century B.C., as an aspect of the establishment and re-organization of the Jewish Church-State after the return from the Exile, there was formed and adopted:

**Canon of
the Law** *THE CANON OF THE LAW: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.* And this Law, thus made central in Jewish life, has never lost its primacy. As it was first to be canonized, so it was, and continues to be, first in holiness and authority among the Jews.

It should be observed that this Law was adopted as "the law of Moses," and "the law of God," "the commandments of Jehovah our Lord." It was the expression of the will of the God of Israel through Moses, his servant, and the

Its Bases

great deliverer of the people. The Return originated as a religio-national movement, and, in its consummation under Nehemiah and Ezra, it was characterized by the most exact and rigid exclusiveness. The whole movement, as conceived and carried through by them, found its fitting expression in the canonization of the Law of Moses, which was at once an expression, a defense, and a means of perpetuation, of the Jewish religious consciousness as the peculiar people of Jehovah.

For two centuries or more this Law was the only Bible of the Jews. The other books had such value and authority as individual devotion might assign them; but they had no such public position or sanction as was enjoyed by the Law. That position, indeed, they never fully attained; but by and by, by processes that are quite obscure and largely conjectural, these other books came to be added to the Law, to the increase and tremendous enrichment of the Canon.

Alexander of Macedon won Syria with the battle of Issus (333 B.C.), destroyed the Persian power in the battle of Arbela (331), and thus became the master of the East. After his early death, his dominions were divided among four of his generals, and Palestine was a point of friction between Syria and Egypt for three or four generations. For one hundred years it was mainly a dependency of Egypt; but finally fell under the sovereignty of Syria in 199 B.C., where it remained until the Maccabean revolt.

(a) *Production.* The surviving literature of this troubled time is scant. It embraces:

1. Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, 350-250 B.C
2. The Song of Songs (Canticles, or The Song of Solomon).
3. Proverbs.
4. Ecclesiastes, 250.

(b) *Canonization*. But none of these recent books was included in the addition to the canon that was made during, or soon after the close of this period. Whether because of their newness, their character, or for other reasons, they were passed by in favor of the older books that have been enumerated in preceding lists. And most of these older books were now gathered into.

THE CANON OF THE PROPHETS,
and added to the Canon of the Law. This new canon contained:

1. *The Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings*, the four great ancient historical books that emanated from prophetic schools and viewed the history through the eyes of the prophets.

2. *The Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and The Twelve*, the prophets in the stricter sense. The book of The Twelve, which we call the Minor Prophets, contained the same twelve, from Hosea to Malachi, that now appear in all our Old Testaments.

This Canon of the Prophets was formed and added to the Law within the century 300-200 B.C., probably toward the close of that century. In the Jewish Bible there is only one reference to "the books" of the prophets. In Daniel 9:2, we read, "I, Daniel, understood *by the books* the number of the years whereof the word of Jehovah came to

Jeremiah the prophet," which indicates a collection of prophetic books prior to the date of the book of Daniel, 167 B.C. The Romish Old Testament contains a book of Ecclesiasticus (or, The Wisdom of Sirach, or, The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach),⁴ which was originally written in Hebrew about 200 B.C., but was translated into Greek by the grandson of the author. In the Greek Prologue to this translation he says (about 132 B.C.): "Many and great things having been given unto us through *the law and the prophets and the others who followed after them . . . my grandfather Jesus, having much given himself to the reading of the law and the prophets and the other books of our fathers, was led also himself to write something . . . (which the writer now translates with an apology). . . For . . . the law itself and the prophets and the rest of the books have no small difference when spoken in their own language.*"

Here, then, we have, carried back to about the year 200 B.C., a threefold division of the Hebrew literature. "*The law and the prophets*" stand out quite clearly, distinguished and yet united, as we find them in the New Testament. In addition to these, there is an amorphous group, called "*the rest of the books,*" which we must consider later. The evidence thus converges upon the period 250-200 B.C. as the date of the formation of the Canon of the Prophets and its addition to the Canon of the Law.

Where and by whom this work was done, we do not know. But the circumstances of the times give us some

⁴This was near-Scripture in certain Jewish circles (see below) at a later date.

Why? probable clues to the forces that issued in this result.

(a) The conquests of Alexander the Great broke up the old order in the East and brought the Jews into subjection to a new world power and into contact with a new and alluring culture. The Jewish state, already harassed and shaken by the last fierce struggle between Persia and Egypt before Alexander appeared upon the scene, fell, with Alexander's death in 323, between the upper and the nether millstones of Syria and Egypt.⁵ Though it was generally under the supremacy of Egypt in the century from 300-200 B.C., Syria never relaxed its claim; and at times the Jews were paying tribute to both countries.

In addition to this external distress and confusion, which reached its height in the conflicts between the rival overlords around the middle of the century, there were two inner and less conspicuous movements that greatly affected the attitudes and fortunes of the Jews. One of these was *migrations*, especially to Egypt, which greatly enlarged the already considerable Jewish population of that country, and soon made of the newly founded city of Alexandria the most prosperous, populous, and influential center of the Jewish Dispersion. The other was the insidious but steady spread, even among the Jews of the homeland, of the new *Greek culture*, which finally made the Greek tongue the common language of the Mediterranean world, including the Dispersion, and threatened in its course the disin-

⁵See Daniel 11, with the commentaries, especially ICC.

tegration and absorption of the distinctive Jewish religious inheritance, until that threat was nullified by the Maccabean revolt which it itself precipitated.

Times like these will always turn the thoughts of some earnest souls to glories departed or departing and to treasures that become the more precious as the danger of their loss increases. Such times provide the moment and the impulse for the conservation of our heritage, and the more as that inheritance is the more distinctive and revered. And as this attitude is essentially conservative, it has little or no concern for the products of the present: its interest is with the past.

(b) Added to these more general considerations that would prompt pious and loyal Jews to a higher esteem for, and a more careful conservation of, their distinctive heritage in the written memorials of prophecy, whether history, exhortation, reproof, or promise, there were certain special considerations that tended to the enhancement and conservation of their prophetic inheritance in particular.

Prophecy had vindicated itself as the voice of God in the general realization of the judgment that it had pronounced upon the nation for its sins, and upon its oppressors, Assyria and Babylon, so that the post-exilic attitude toward the prophets was one of increasing reverence. And, finally, the historical books told of the ancient glories of the nation, departed but never forgotten, and the prophets proper enshrined the promises of greater glories that God had still in store for the People of his Choosing, so that both memories and hopes, neither of which could be extinguished,

conspired to give the prophetic writings a place of peculiar importance and value, increasing rather than diminishing with the deepening gloom of present perplexity and distress.

(c) Ezra and Nehemiah had made The Law supreme; but some of their extreme positions had not passed without vigorous, if outwardly ineffective, protest, which has left its own splendid memorials in the books of Ruth and of Jonah. The Law overshadowed the prophets and dominated the religious life of post-exilic Judaism; but the Law itself contained its prophetic element, the utterances and ideals of the prophets were cherished—witness their preservation through all the changing centuries—and the prophetic flame was never completely extinguished—witness some of the Psalms of the period under consideration. In some souls there was a living bond of sympathy with the prophet. He was loved for his own sake. Though dead, he yet spoke.

Under these various influences, the prophetic writings were collected and canonized in the last half of the third century (250-200) B.C., and from this time down to the present the Jewish Bible has contained these two definite bodies of literature, The Law, and The Prophets. For a time they constituted the whole Jewish Bible, and they still occupy the first and second places of sanctity and authority. But the Jewish Bible took on yet another increment before it assumed the form in which we know it to-day.

All of the older literature that we have mentioned, except the Psalms, Lamentations, Job, and Ruth, was

included in the Canon of the Prophets.

Fourth Stage Besides these books, there was the more recent literature that we have already mentioned (under "Third Stage"), written, indeed, before the formation of the prophetic canon, but, like Psalms, Lamentations, Job, and Ruth, not included therein.

(a) *Production.* Besides all these extant but undefined books, two books now included in the Jewish Bible had not been written when the prophetic Canon was formed:

1. Daniel, 167 B.C.; and

2. Esther, about 150 B.C.⁶

There was thus, in the early years of the Maccabean struggle, a considerable number of Hebrew books, of varying age and character, and of indeterminate status, over and above the dual collection of The Law and The Prophets.

(b) *Canonization.* The story of the collection and canonization of these books constitutes the last chapter in the history of the formation of the Jewish Canon of the Sacred Scriptures.

We have already seen, in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (132 B.C.), allusions to "other books" in addition to

"the Law and the Prophets;" but, unfortunately,

"The Rest of the Books" these other books are not more clearly defined either in status or in contents. From the body of Ecclesiasticus itself (written about 200 B.C.), we may infer that Ezra,

⁶ The dates used above are, for the most part, from McFadyen. Though open to criticism in several particulars, they fairly represent the modern view of the chronology.

Nehemiah, Chronicles, and perhaps Lamentations, some of the Psalms, and Proverbs, were among these "other books." That result, scant and disappointing as it is, throws light upon *the growth* of the Canon. Men did

Growth not come together and make a collection of books and arbitrarily or artificially invest them with a sanctity which they had never had before. The books had their separate stages and degrees of growing reverence, and the canon-makers (on the whole), in bringing the books together, merely recognized this previous process, confirmed its results, generalized it, and added to the whole whatever additional sanctity belongs to ecclesiastical decision and acceptance.

We have thus quite early, not long after the close of the prophetic canon, indication of reverence for other books than those included in the Law and the Prophets, and even the vague indication of a group of such books. And it is altogether probable that the madness of Antiochus Epiphanes against the Jews tended both to enhance the reverence for these books and to sharpen the outlines of their group.

Palestine, as we have seen, became a dependency of Syria in 199 B.C. Antiochus IV, Epiphanes ("God manifest"), or, as his enemies styled him, Epimanes ("The Madman"), came to the throne in 175; and, in pursuit of his policy of unifying his kingdom by the diffusion of a common Hellenic culture, soon set out to destroy, by the most bitter persecution, all the distinctive traits of Judaism, because he found in them the chief barrier in the way of the accomplishment of his purpose. This

**Attempt to
Destroy
Judaism**

mad course naturally led to a violent reaction that took the form of the Maccabean revolt, through which the Jews finally gained their permanent religious, and temporary political, independence. Since this revolt started as a defense of the Jewish religious inheritance and practices, it naturally led to an enhanced interest in, and reverence for, the Sacred Books, especially the Law. This, in turn, naturally accentuated the question of the status of the other books not yet included in the Canon; and some scholars maintain that this process issued in the definite formation of *The Canon of the Writings* (Hebrew, *Kethubim*; Greek, *Hagiographa*) about 150 B.C., or in the half-century that followed.

But this statement gives a false impression of conclusiveness. For there is quite competent evidence to show that this group was still open, not clearly and finally defined, until well into New Testament times. One might fairly say, perhaps, (with G. A. Smith and a few others) that the group was "pretty generally accepted before the Christian era"; but how far such acceptance, if conceded, was from definitive and final canonization may be seen from the following facts:⁷

Not Defined
Until the
End of the
First Cen-
tury A.D.

(a) The Council of Jewish Rabbis at Jamnia, in 91

⁷ It is worthy of note that Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, and Esther are not quoted or used by the writers of the New Testament, or by the Alexandrine Jewish philosopher Philo (about 40 A.D.). Neither, indeed, are some other books of the Old Testament, and yet the fact that just these three are the most clearly uncertain gives to their absence special significance.

A.D., felt it necessary to pass upon the canonicity of Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon, which they did in the words: "All Holy Scriptures defile the hands (*i.e.*, 'are canonical'): Canticles and Ecclesiastes defile the hands."

(*b*) From a little later time, though from an unknown source, comes another rabbinical pronouncement to the effect that "the gospel and the books of the heretics (*i.e.*, the Christian literature) are not Sacred Scripture. The book of Ben Sira (*i.e.*, Ecclesiasticus), and whatever books have been written since his time, are not Sacred Scripture."⁸

(*c*) The earliest Christian list that we have of the Jewish Scriptures, secured by personal inquiry in Palestine by Melito of Sardis (180 A.D.), omits the book of Esther; and this is quite in line with the pronouncement, about the same time, of the Rabbi Jehudah, "the greatest Jewish teacher of his day," that "the book of Esther defileth not the hands."⁹

At the beginning of the Christian era, then, "the rest of the books" was still a fluid group. Ecclesiastes,

Canticles, and Esther were, probably, in the group, but of very doubtful status. Ecclesiasticus was on the edge of the group (probably within it, in certain quarters), so that its position also needed to be defined. And it was the action of the Council of Jamnia that formally

⁸ Moore, *Judaism*, I, 243. Necessitated by the (1) rise of Christian literature and (2) high esteem of Ecclesiasticus, regarded by some Jews as Scripture.

⁹ W. O. E. Oesterley, *Hast. 1 Vol. s. v.* "Esther."

and finally fixed the limits of the group, and so constituted and determined the third section of the Jewish Scriptures,

THE CANON OF THE WRITINGS, which contains, in the order of the present Jewish Bible:

1. *The Poetical Books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job.*

2. *The Five Rolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther.*

3. *The Remainder of the Books: Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles.* In this action, the Council both gave sanction and formal expression to the reverence with which the books were already regarded, and settled certain doubtful cases; and by this double process it fixed and closed the Canon of the Jewish Bible.

This action was both conservative and defensive. Its general design was at once to protect the distinctive treasures of Palestinian (Hebrew) Judaism, and to sharpen the lines of distinction between this Judaism and the rest of the world. As causes for this attitude and action, we note:

Bases (a) National calamities had culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. But the destruction of the city, with the temple and its cult, had not destroyed the religio-racial self-consciousness of the Jews: that was indestructible. On the contrary, it rather intensified this self-consciousness; and it furnished urgent occasion for the conservation of whatever was left of their distinctive religious inheritance and experiences. And the chief part, almost the whole, of that remainder was now their Hebrew religious books, "the rest of the books of their fathers."

(b) The Bible had been by this time translated into Greek (see next chapter); and the Greek Version was, for the most part, the Bible of the Dispersion. But this Greek Version was not limited to the ancient Hebrew books revered in Palestine. Should it, then, be permitted to become the Bible of the Jewish world? The action of the Council at Jamnia gave an answer to that question. It drew the line sharply between the older and the more recent books, between those written in the Hebrew and those written in, or translated into, Greek; and it declared the older Hebrew books to be the exclusive and sacred standard of Judaism.

(c) The Greek Bible was also the Bible of the Christians, and from it they drew many proofs to sustain and vindicate their faith, both in controversy with the Jews and in expansion among the Gentiles. This fact, which later led to the preparation of other Greek versions more congenial to Jewish views, inevitably turned the Jews away from the current Greek Version, led to appeal from a translation to the original, and so emphasized the isolation, the definition, and the supremacy of that original.

The simple, single, and indeed imperative, answer to the situation thus described was the collection and canonization of the Rest of the Hebrew Books and their attachment to the Law and the Prophets, to complete the authoritative Scriptures of the Jews of Palestine, and ere long to become the sole authoritative Scriptures of all orthodox Jews. And so this final stage in the formation of the Jewish Canon was, as we have seen in previous stages, an expression of the religio-racial con-

sciousness of the Jews as a peculiar people, at once an expression and a strengthening of their distinctiveness and isolation. And the Canon thus completed included all of their surviving Hebrew literature.

CHAPTER III

THE JEWISH BIBLE IN THE DISPERSION— GREEK

“MOSES,” said James, the brother of Jesus, at the Council in Jerusalem, about 50 A.D., “from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath” (Acts 15:21). And we need hardly go outside of the Scriptures to see how true, and how significant, this was.

The Dispersion Outward movements of the Hebrews from Palestine prior to the reformation of Josiah (621 B.C., last chapter), whether these movements were voluntary or under compulsion, need not concern us. The great deportations under Tiglath-pileser III, and Sargon II, which attended the ruin of the Northern Kingdom and the destruction of Samaria (722 B.C.), left the further religious development of the nation to the southern tribes. The religion of Jehovah in the northern tribes was not yet sufficiently distinctive and assimilated to stand the shock. And so the leading citizens, who were carried into exile, were swallowed up, absorbed in their new environment; while the people of the land, who were left, became, through the infusion of pagan elements and union with them, the Samaritans, those half-pagan and half-Jewish survivors and successors of the “ten lost tribes” who were more and more despised and hated by the purer and stricter Jews of the southern tribes.

These southern tribes, too, had their own checkered

history. But by the time of the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) the religion of Jehovah had become clear-cut and distinctive, their own peculiar and precious possession. They "stood to the covenant," as they had pledged themselves in Josiah's reformation, and so they were carried to Babylon so much the people of Jehovah that their individuality was neither destroyed by captivity nor dissolved by the culture and customs of their captors. They were Jews set down by the rivers of Babylon for a season, and in a strange land they remembered Zion.

When the door was opened for their possible return, most of them elected to stay in their new homes: *but they stayed as Jews*, and their successors constituted Jewish communities in Babylonia down to 1000 A.D.¹ From their expansion arose many other Jewish colonies in the east. Those who elected to return to the homeland *returned as Jews*, under the specific permission to reestablish the worship of Jehovah, and reconstitute their distinctive religious community, in its ancient sacred center, Jerusalem. And when, after a century, Nehemiah and Ezra became the leaders and consummators of the movement, they brought with them, as the fruit of labor and devotion in Babylon, that compilation of ancient histories and laws fused with priestly ideals for the future, known as "the law of Moses" and "the law of God," the Pentateuch, around which they organized and solidified the new community and marked

¹The Babylonian Talmud is the great monument of the religious interests and activity of the Babylonian Jews in the fifth century of the Christian era.

it off with final sharpness, so that the Jews of the Return were more distinctively Jews than the Jews of the Exile. (See last chapter.) This sharp marking off and typing of the Judaism of the Return is our chief interest in the Babylonian Dispersion.

On the other side must be placed the course of development in the Hellenistic Dispersion. Contact with the Hellenistic world after the days of Alexander the Great and increasing use of the Greek language had considerable and lasting effect upon Judaism both in homeland and in the Dispersion. Negatively, these modifying influences led, in certain stricter circles, to a *strong reaction* toward an even sharper and more exacting definition of the distinctive, especially the legalistic, features of traditional Judaism. This was particularly true in Palestine, though not without effect in the Dispersion (compare Saul of Tarsus), and it issued in that stereotyped form of Judaism that we see at last in the Tannaim. Positively, these Hellenistic influences issued in a more liberal type of thinking and behavior, especially in the Dispersion; and this tendency increased as time and distance reduced contacts with and weakened the supremacy of the homeland. Thus there arose a cleavage within Judaism itself between stricter and more liberal groups corresponding approximately to the Judaism of Palestine and the Judaism of the Hellenistic Dispersion; and around the synagogues of the latter there gathered a new group of Gentile "God-fearers," who accepted the lofty ethical monotheism of Judaism but refused to accept, or to submit to, its distinctive legalistic and

ceremonial requirements. These latter groups, the more liberal Jews of the Dispersion and the "God-fearers" who gathered around them, were of great importance for our present study as well as for the later spread of Christianity among the Gentiles. They established an effective contact, from the Jewish world Gentileward and from the Gentile world Jewward, between Jew and Gentile, and so served as an indispensable middle term between the two groups.

The Dispersion in Egypt was a long process, of many moments, sometimes compulsory but more frequently voluntary. Beginning immediately after **Alexandria** the death of good king Josiah (608 B.C.), when Pharaoh Necho deposed Josiah's son Jehoahaz and sent him (and probably some of his friends and supporters) captive into Egypt, its chief moment was the great movement Egyptward in the days of Alexander the Great, and it continued through the following centuries until Jewish groups were widely distributed throughout Egypt and Northern Africa, and Alexandria became the largest and most influential center of the Hellenistic Dispersion. In New Testament times forty per cent of the city's population is said to have been Jews, and they were privileged and influential in proportion to their numbers.²

² Other, even very important centers of the Dispersion are here passed by with the remark that the statement of James with which this chapter opened was almost literally exact. By his time Jewish groups were to be found all over the Roman world. But our present interest is in Alexandrine Judaism, for it is there that we find developments of the utmost importance for the history of the Canon.

Some of these Egyptian Jews, indeed, as the crowd that carried the protesting Jeremiah with them after the destruction of Jerusalem, simply abandoned the religion of their fathers. Others, at the opposite extreme, apparently undertook to transport Judaism bodily from Palestine to Egypt, as when the high priest Onias III (or II), legitimate successor of the Aaronic line, established, about 170 B. C., another temple at Leontopolis, where the worship of Jehovah was carried on for about 250 years independently of the temple in Jerusalem. But neither of these extremes represented or dominated the general situation. For the most part, the Jews of Egypt, particularly of Alexandria, continued to be Jews, and remained more or less in touch with the central Judaism of Jerusalem.

And yet there were deep and vital differences; some of which, indeed, appeared in many quarters, so that generally the Judaism of the Dispersion was

Differences not quite the same as the Judaism of the homeland. But, for our study, these differences were most conspicuous and most effective in Alexandria.

(a) Alexandrine Judaism did not, as did Palestinian and Babylonian, turn back upon itself. Down to the Christian era, and after, it was not a case

Progress there of arrested development. In Alexandria Judaism was in the great currents of the new world life, and, while it was not dissolved by those currents, neither did it shut itself up wholly against them and refuse them all recognition and concession. Its religion was distinctively the religion of Jehovah; but it held

that faith in contact with a great and throbbing world outside, that, though different, was seen to be neither wholly unfriendly nor wholly bad. And so it did not comprehensively repudiate that world, but rather established contacts with it; and it undertook to interpret its religion to that world, using for that purpose the implements that that world itself supplied. It was, therefore, both more living and more liberal than the Judaism of the homeland.

(b) Alexandrine Judaism, like the rest of the Hellenistic Dispersion, was Greek-speaking. Even in Palestine, Hebrew became a literary rather than a spoken language probably before the time of Alexander the Great, and after his day Greek made considerable inroads upon the spoken Aramaic, so that Palestine itself became practically a bilingual country, using Aramaic in the daily intercourse of Jew with Jew but adding to that an extensive acquaintance with and use of the common Greek. Including Palestine, and allowing for bilingualism in the several countries, this common Greek became, indeed, the language of the world before the beginning of the Christian era. "It is worth our while," says M. Brunet de Presle, "to notice the rapid diffusion of Greek, after Alexander's conquest, among a mass of people who in all other respects jealously preserved their national characteristics under foreign masters. The papyri show us Egyptians, Persians, Jews, and here Arabs, who do not appear to belong to the upper classes, using the Greek language."³ "No one can fail to see how im-

³Quoted in Moulton's *Grammar of N. T. Greek, Prolegomena*,

measurably important these conditions were for the growth of Christianity. The historian marks the fact that the Gospel began its career of conquest at the one period in the world's annals when civilization was concentrated under a single ruler. The grammarian adds that this was the only period when a single language was understood throughout the countries which counted for the history of that Empire."⁴ It is true, but hardly sufficient, to say that Alexandria shared in this world situation. For Alexandria was a new city of Greek foundation, so that this common Greek naturally became not only the medium of communication between the different elements of the city's population but the language of the city itself. Accessions to the population took over the language as a part of their incorporation into the city; and for new generations this common Greek was the language into which they were born. Ancestral languages survived, when they survived at all, in small groups and for special uses. Greek was the language of the city; and for most of the population Greek was not only the language of daily intercourse but was the only language known.

This situation, as has been indicated, was not peculiar to Alexandria. The spread of Greek was a world movement. It operated even in Palestine, though there Aramaic continued to be the living language of the Jews; and the Hellenistic Dispersion came generally to

**The Greek
Bible**

p. 7, note. And Moulton adds: "If these remarks, published in 1865, had been followed up as they deserved, Deissmann would have come too late." ⁴ Moulton, p. 6.

be Greek-speaking by the days of Jesus. But the situation in Alexandria issued in distinct and momentous consequences: *for out of it came the Greek Bible of the Judaism of the Dispersion*, and thus (a) the Hebrew Old Testament passed over into the world language, and (b) in the process took on an increment peculiar to the Dispersion.

The tradition is that the process of translation had its beginning rather in the bibliophile interest of the reigning monarch than in the needs of the

Translation Alexandrine Jews, and this, from the early date, might possibly be true. Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.), so the story goes, sought a copy of the Mosaic Law from the high priest Eleazer in Jerusalem for the Library at Alexandria, and had it translated from the Hebrew into Greek by seventy (or seventy-two) men skilled in both languages. A good many extravagances are attached to this tradition, but it certainly embodies some truth. The work of translation was done at Alexandria. It was probably begun before 250 B.C. But its origin is rather to be traced to the needs of the Alexandrine Jews for their Law in a familiar tongue than to royal interest and initiation.

From the number of translators specified in this tradition, seventy (or seventy-two, "six from each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel"), the whole of the Greek Old Testament came early to be known as *The Septuagint*, or, simply, *The LXX*. But the work of translation was not completed all at once, or by the same hands; it will be observed that the above tradition refers only to the Law. It was carried through, as it had been begun,

at Alexandria; but its stages are obscure, and the workers are unknown. Whatever the truth about its origin, it was the religious interests and needs of Alexandrine Judaism that carried the work to its completion, and it is most probable, as has been said, that the whole process should be traced to the same causes.

Naturally the Law was translated first. In 250 B.C. it constituted the only Canon of the Jews; and from the days of Nehemiah and Ezra it has always been central and supreme in the Jewish Bible. (See last chapter.) By the time of Sirach (132 B.C.), whose own work was a Greek translation of his grandfather's Hebrew, other books of the then Hebrew Canon, which he describes as "the prophets, and the rest of the books," seem already to have been translated into Greek. And, "on the whole, though the direct evidence is fragmentary, it is probable that before the Christian era Alexandria possessed the whole, or nearly the whole, of the Hebrew Scriptures in a Greek translation."⁵

But Jewish life and experience, national and individual, did not cease with the composition of the last book of the Hebrew Old Testament, which, as we have seen, was probably the book of Esther, written about 150 B.C. Jewish faith in God and need for him did not cease; nor did God leave his people alone, or himself without a living witness, during the dreary and distressing years from Malachi to Matthew. Nor did those years leave no literary memorials. On the contrary, more Jewish writing lies between

⁵Swete, Introduction to the O. T. in Greek, p. 25.

Malachi and Matthew than between Moses and Malachi.

We have seen that our present Hebrew Old Testament contains books, and parts of books, that belong to the Maccabean period. Overlapping, chronologically, with these later books there is a considerable body of Jewish literature that was produced in the three centuries preceding the Council of Jamnia and the final closing of the Hebrew Canon. This literature may be divided and classified as follows:⁶

Apocrypha

1. Historical: 1 Maccabees; 2 Maccabees; 1 Esdras.
2. Legendary: Additions to Esther; Additions to Daniel (*i.e.*, History of Susanna, Song of the Three Holy Children, and Bel and the Dragon); Tobit; Judith.
3. Prophetic: Baruch; Prayer of Manasseh.
4. Apocalyptic: 2 Esdras.
5. Didactic: Sirach; Wisdom of Solomon.

Pseudepigrapha

1. Canonical: Ecclesiastes; Daniel (and parts of some of the older books).
2. Non-Canonical: Noah; Enoch; Testaments of the XII Patriarchs; Book of Jubilees; Psalms of Solomon.

All of these books, according to Charles, were written between 200 B.C. and 1 B.C. Some of them were written in Hebrew, some in Aramaic, and some in Greek; and some enjoyed an extensive vogue and a high reputation even among the Jews of Palestine. But none of them, except Ecclesiastes and Daniel, was

⁶Following R. H. Charles.

received into the Hebrew Canon by the Rabbis at Jamnia. They limited the period of inspiration to the succession of the prophets from Moses to Malachi, with whose death "the Holy spirit ceased out of Israel."⁷ By many chronological blunders they managed to bring all of the books of the Hebrew Canon within this period; but no later books could be regarded as inspired, or be received into a sacred and inspired collection.

But Alexandrine Judaism was largely independent of Palestinian control. It had become acclimated in its Greek home when there was no Canon but that of the Law. It had seen its Canon growing by the admission of new books. And even if it had sought in Palestine a definition of the final limits of this growth, it could not have found one clear and undisputed until the end of the first century A.D.; for until that date the outlines of the Canon, in the section of the Hagiographa, were still fluid and undetermined even in the homeland. Under these circumstances, Alexandrine Judaism showed itself more catholic than Palestinian. It included in its Greek Old Testament translations of all the books finally sanctioned by the Palestinian Rabbis, but it included also numerous others of these later apocryphal and pseudepigraphical productions (whether translated into Greek, or written in that language) that those Rabbis finally rejected and excluded from the Hebrew Canon; and thus the Greek Old Testament came to differ very widely from the Hebrew.⁸ This may be indicated by a compari-

⁷Moore, *Judaism*, I, 421.

⁸This was a matter of usage and common consent rather than of any formal decree.

son of the lists of books contained in the two. The order of the books varies considerably in the different lists. In the following table, the order of the Hebrew Old Testament is that given in the English Translation of the Jewish Publication Society, while the order of the Greek Old Testament is that of Swete's edition of the Septuagint. The numbers prefixed to the names of the books show the Hebrew order: the numbers after the names of the books show the Greek order, which is very different from the Hebrew.

Greek Old Testament

Contents of the Hebrew and of the Greek Old Testaments

HEBREW ORDER	BOOKS COMMON TO BOTH	GREEK ORDER	BOOKS PECULIAR TO THE GREEK
1	Genesis	1	
2	Exodus	2	
3	Leviticus	3	
4	Numbers	4	
5	Deuteronomy	5	
6	Joshua	6	
7	Judges	7	
8	1 Samuel	9	
9	2 Samuel	10	
10	1 Kings	11	
11	2 Kings	12	
12	Isaiah	39	
13	Jeremiah	40	
14	Ezekiel	44	
15	Hosea	27	
16	Joel	30	
17	Amos	28	
18	Obadiah	31	
19	Jonah	32	
20	Micah	29	
21	Nahum	33	
22	Habakkuk	34	

THE JEWISH BIBLE IN THE DISPERSION

23	Zephaniah	35
24	Haggai	36
25	Zechariah	37
26	Malachi	38
27	Psalms	17
28	Proverbs	18
29	Job	21
30	Song of Songs	20
31	Ruth	8
32	Lamentations	42
33	Ecclesiastes	19
34	Esther	24
35	Daniel	45
36	Ezra	16
37	Nehemiah	16
38	1 Chronicles	13
39	2 Chronicles	14

THE WRITINGS

22	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>
23	<i>Wisdom of Sirach</i>
41	<i>Baruch</i>
43	<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>
25	<i>Judith</i>
26	<i>Tobit</i>
46	<i>Susanna</i>
47	<i>Bel and the Dragon</i>
15	<i>1 Ezra</i>
48	<i>1 Maccabees</i>
49	<i>2 Maccabees</i>
50	<i>3 Maccabees</i>
51	<i>4 Maccabees</i>
52	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
53	<i>Enoch</i>

The most conspicuous difference in these two lists is the presence in the Greek of whole books that do not appear at all in the Hebrew. Omitting 52 and 53,

which constitute a sort of Appendix in Swete's Septuagint,⁹ there remain thirteen books in Swete's edition of the Greek Old Testament over and above the books that it has in common with the Hebrew. These books fall into certain groups, some of whose relations may be seen in the number-sequence in the Greek order. Thus:

a. 13, 14, 15, 16 make up a historical group containing 1 and 2 Chronicles, 1 Ezra, and 2 Ezra. 2 Ezra in the Greek is our Ezra-Nehemiah, as one book; while 1 Ezra "consists of an independent and somewhat free version of portions of 2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, broken by a long context which has no parallel in the Hebrew Bible."¹⁰ This group constitutes a priestly history, in contrast with the prophetic history embodied in the older historical books, from the Creation to the Return.

b. 40, 41, 42, 43 constitute a group so closely attached to the name of Jeremiah that they might all be included

⁹ The Psalms of Solomon (No. 52) seems to have been in Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century) as well as in Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century); but it is now found only in a few late manuscripts in the group of Solomonic books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song, and Wisdom of Solomon. Enoch has a place in the Ethiopic Old Testament and is quoted in our epistle of Jude.

¹⁰ 1 Ezra was regarded in the early Church as equal, if not superior, to 2 Ezra. 2 Ezra, indeed, was not translated into Greek until the second century A.D. (Theodotion). Before that time 1 Ezra was the Ezra of the Greek-speaking Church: but it was ultimately supplanted by 2 Ezra. In the Latin Vulgate 1 Ezra appears in an Appendix, as worthful but noncanonical.

under the single designation "Jeremiah" in the enumeration of the books of the Old Testament.¹¹

c. 45, 46, 47 constitute a somewhat similar Danielic group. In the Greek manuscripts, indeed, 46 and 47 are included in an enlarged 45, and the whole, with the Song of the Three Holy Children, constitutes the Greek book of Daniel.

d. 24, 25, 26 constitute a group of episodic books of which only the first was finally received into the Hebrew Canon. But the Esther thus hesitatingly received into the Hebrew Canon is very much smaller than this Esther of the Greek Old Testament.

e. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 constitute a group of Wisdom books of which four, 18, 19, 20, 22, were attached to the name of Solomon, the "wise man" par excellence; and this Solomonic group was sometimes enlarged by the addition of 23, and of "The Psalms of Solomon" (No. 52).

f. 48, 49, 50, 51 constitute a group of later historical books of varying value, and mainly concerned, as their name implies, with the tragic period of the Maccabean struggle.

All these groups, it will be observed, are somehow related or attached to books in the Hebrew division of The Writings. There is no increase to the books of The Law. In The Prophets, Jeremiah is enlarged, though even there Baruch and The Epistle belong rather with Lamentations. But, as we have seen, the Canon of The

¹¹ This is even true of fathers who in general emphatically preferred the Hebrew to the Greek Old Testament.

Writings was the last to be closed even in Palestine. It was still not finally defined, and therefore was subject to enlargement or diminution, even after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Here, then, if anywhere, we should expect the further growth of the Canon; while the fact that the Canon did actually grow at this point confirms, in turn, the long indeterminateness of the section.

In addition to this outstanding fact of the much larger number of books in the Greek Old Testament, a little closer inspection will show that even books that the Hebrew and the Greek have in common do not have identical contents. Not to mention matters of translation, or divergencies of only a few verses here and there, there are other internal differences of considerable extent and importance. Daniel and Esther, for example, are considerably longer in Greek than they are in Hebrew, while Jeremiah and Job are shorter. What has been said above (Chapter I) about the many differences between our current English versions might be repeated and enlarged relative to the still greater differences between the Hebrew and the Greek; but this general statement will suffice.

There were thus two very different Old Testaments current in the first century of the Christian era, both in use among the Jews themselves. Even for the Palestinian Jew, the Hebrew Old Testament was not closed until the end of that century; and Hebrew was a dead language. Consequently the Palestinian Jew frequently, perhaps commonly, read his Old Testament in

Two Old Testaments in the First Century

the Greek; but his tendency would be to limit its contents to the books approved by the Palestinian Rabbis. The Jew of the Dispersion might follow the leadership of the homeland (as ultimately he has come to do), or he might use the larger Old Testament of the Septuagint, and the Septuagint was the Bible of the Hellenistic Dispersion, used in the synagogues of Greek-speaking Jews. The early Christian would be in a somewhat similar situation, according as he was a Jewish or a Gentile Christian. But as the Church became increasingly Gentile (Greek), and the antagonism between Jews and Christians became more and more marked, the tendency would be toward the fixation of the smaller Old Testament for the Jew, as soon came to be the case, while the fate of the larger book awaited the course of development of the expanding Gentile Church.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN BIBLE

**Not Con-
cerned with
Definition** THE effort to define the limits of the Bible of the first Christians is an effort to do for them something that they did not attempt to do for themselves. Primitive Christianity was a new, vital, prophetic and creative movement that had its birth, indeed, in Judaism, but soon outgrew its birthplace, and set out upon a career of its own. It had, in a certain dynamic sense, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism": but it was rather "a wind blowing across the world" than any such solid and definable organization as we now generally understand when we speak of "a Church." It was, indeed, interested in its inheritance of Jewish Messianism, with the ethical elements involved therein, but it was much more interested in the early realization of its Messianic hopes. And it was very much alive with the stir of crisis and impending change. It was a new prophetism; the Spirit of God had returned to Israel, and Israel, after Paul's day, was the "ideal Israel" composed of the new body of believers. It cherished the prophecies that it fulfilled, and proclaimed itself and its message as the foreseen culmination of the old, and the foreseeing initiation of the new, era.

To suppose that such an age had its eyes primarily upon the past, or was concerned with the minutiae of definition, is to ignore both the known facts and the whole psychology of such a situation. Men who are so

vividly conscious of a revelation of their own need not discredit the revelations of the past, but they will certainly not use them to discount or deny their own. The

Jews denied the validity of the Christian revelation; and one of the influences that contributed to their fixation of their Canon was the desire to protect the past that they revered from the present that they repudiated. The Christian could not possibly take this position. His interest in the past was not as past, but as projecting itself and realizing itself in the present. He lived in the midst of, and shared, a great apocalyptic enthusiasm. His were those "last days" in which, according to his prophetic promise, God would "pour out of his Spirit upon all flesh" (Joel 2, 28ff; Acts 2, 16ff.); and the very plenitude of the "spiritual gifts" that he enjoyed made it impossible for him to limit revelation to the past, and made him little disposed to limit its scope, whether past or present, by academic or mechanical definition.

This condition, at once vital and vague, gradually faded out; but it extended, in some degree, well into the second century of the Christian era; and it is only in the half century from 150 to 200 A.D. that we begin to find in the Christian Church specific definitions of the limits of the Old Testament.¹ These definitions themselves are evidence of an existing vagueness that they

¹ The earliest is the list of Melito of Sardis, about 180 A.D., which Westcott supposes to be "a catalogue of the books in the Palestinian LXX, the Greek Bible which was used by our Lord and the Apostles" (Bible in the Church, p. 124). That Bible lacked at least the book of Esther.

sought to correct. They exhibit their own peculiarities, and they were less final and universal than we are apt to think. For it was, indeed, only the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century that ultimately gave to the Old Testament that sharpness and finality of definition with which we are familiar.²

All this is not to say that the earliest Christians did not have any Bible. They did; but their Bible, as far as it can be certainly defined, was not identical with our own. Since the New Testament, as a collection, did not yet exist, the Bible of the earliest Christians was an Old Testament only. But what were the contents of that Old Testament?

**The Earliest
Christian
Bible**

(1) There were, from the beginning of this period, as we have seen, two different Old Testaments, the Hebrew and the Greek. The existence of two different Old Testaments shows that all who had and used a Bible in the first ages did not have or use the same book. They had and used, roughly, the same Law and Proph-

**An Old Testa-
ment, But
Which One?**

²Harnack says (Hist. of Dogma, 3, 194) that the limits of the Old Testament were entirely indefinite down to the fourth century. And Schuerer says: "The restricting of the Christian Canon to precisely the same number of books as was in the Hebrew Bible was, in the early Church and that of the Middle Ages, almost always a pure matter of theory and was only practically recognized and acted upon for the first time in the Protestant Church" (HJP II, 3, 27). And he might have added that this restriction, where it first appeared, was confined to certain academic circles and did not represent the general faith and practice of the Church.

ets; for these were fairly identical entities. But all Old Testaments contained more than The Law and The Prophets. How much more?

(2) That question cannot be answered conclusively even for all the Jews, or for the Jewish section of the Christian Church that may have followed their lead in the matter. If the rabbis themselves differed, for example, about the canonicity of Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, which they finally included in the Canon, and of the Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), which they finally excluded,³ the status of these books would not be one of universal acceptance, but rather a matter of party affiliation. And this condition lasted until the close of the first century A.D., and, for Esther, even longer.⁴ The exact limits of the Bible, then, even of Palestinian Jews, and of such others, Jews or Christians, as may have followed them, cannot be determined before the close of the first century.

(3) By the time it was thus possible formally to define the limits of the Palestinian Canon, Jerusalem had been

³ "The controversy between the two schools (of Hillel and of Shammai) over the question whether Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs were holy scripture was decided by a majority vote in favor of both of them, following the opinion of the school of Hillel. Another decision in this period (about 100 A.D.)—the time and place are unknown—concerning what we call the Canon of Scripture was that the book of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) was not sacred scripture, nor any other books written from his time on" (Moore, *Judaism*, I, 86; compare I, 243).

⁴ Here and there down to as late as the year 700 A.D. some of the Christian fathers regarded Esther as uncanonical, and that view reappeared in even later days.

destroyed and Christianity had become predominantly a Gentile movement. These Gentile believers had little knowledge of, and less concern with, the debates and decisions of the Palestinian rabbis. They had a Bible of their own in the LXX, which they shared with the Hellenistic Dispersion, which was the only Bible that they knew or could use, and which they had neither information nor general inclination to adjust to rabbinical standards, or even sharply to define.

This Bible contained all of the books of the Jewish Canon, and has contained these books down to the present time. But, again ignoring important differences within the common books, the Gentile Bible contained more books than the Jewish Bible contained, and it is a matter not of probability but of demonstration that the early Gentile Church did not throw out these books and so reduce its Bible to identity with the Jewish. Whatever may have been the attitude of the disappearing Jewish section of the Church, the Gentile Church received and retained a larger Bible than the Jewish Bible.

The usage of the earliest Christian writers does not of itself enable us to define the exact limits of their

Bible; but it proves that they used a Greek
The Greek Bible, including, certainly, some books not in the Hebrew: and the larger Bible of the later Romish Church, whose contents can be exactly defined, is not a novelty or an innovation, but is simply the survival of the larger Bible of the earliest ages.

(A) Our New Testament books were written in the century from 50 to 150 A.D. They, therefore, represent

our earliest surviving Christian literature, and, at their lower limit, overlap our earliest non-Canonical literature, so that we have a continuous, though sometimes very thin, line of Christian literature running back to apostolic times.

One looks in vain in the New Testament for any specific definition or list of the contents of the Old Testament; but behind some of its expressions there are quite definite and definable entities. "The Law" is often quoted, and appealed to as authoritative Scripture. While the several books of the law are not mentioned by name, we know that "The Law" was a fixed and definite entity in New Testament times, and under this general designation, as well as under the name "Moses," the writers described the Pentateuch.⁵ Less frequently, but still in numerous places, we find the longer phrase "The law and the prophets"; and sometimes we find quotations from individual prophets by name. Though the quotations from "The Prophets" are very irregular both in number and in distribution, that division, like "The Law," was a definite entity; and the New Testament phrase "The law and the prophets" describes the first and the second divisions of the Old Testament Canon, whose books, as we have

⁵ Not to mention abstract uses of the word "law," not here pertinent, the word was sometimes used in a vaguer and more general sense, much as we use the word "Scripture," as when we find in John 10: 34 a quotation from the Psalms prefixed by the question: "Is it not written in your law?"

seen, were, on the whole, common to the Hebrew and the Greek.

Once, and only once, in the New Testament, we find a general phrase indicative of the fact that the Old Testament was not limited to "the law and **"The Psalms"** the prophets." In Luke 24: 44, we find "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms." And since the book of Psalms stands first or second in our Jewish lists of Old Testament books, first in printed Jewish Bibles, it has been inferred that the word "psalms" in this passage is used as a title to describe the whole Jewish group of "The Writings," and that thus the phrase means exactly the Jewish Bible as we have it to-day.⁶ But this is an erroneous inference. The fact is that there are more express quotations from the book of Psalms than from any other Old Testament book, and that there are practically no such quotations from the rest of "The Writings";⁷ and the Lukan phrase "the law, the prophets, and the (book of) psalms" covers as exactly and as briefly as possible almost the whole field of explicit quotations from the Old Testament in the New.

There is very considerable and very general inexactness in the form of these quotations when compared

⁶But even Westcott says that the form of the Greek in this phrase "points to the conclusion that the reference is rather to different parts of the sacred writings and not to the Bible as a whole under its complex title" (*Bible in the Church*, p. 40).

⁷Six from Proverbs (one counted twice, as twice quoted); one from Job; and one from Daniel (quoted twice), according to Swete.

with their sources, but it is evident that, on **From the LXX** the whole, they are derived from the Alexandrine Greek Old Testament, the LXX. This is, of course, best seen where the Hebrew and the Greek of the source are different, and the New Testament quotation follows the Greek. A few examples will illustrate:⁸

THE HEBREW (<i>Isa. 52: 15</i>)	NEW TESTAMENT (<i>Rom. 15: 21</i>)	THE GREEK (<i>Isa. 52: 15</i>)
"That which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand.	"They shall see to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand."	"They shall see to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand."
(<i>Deut. 21: 23</i>) "He that is hanged is accused of God." ⁹	(<i>Gal. 3: 13</i>) "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."	(<i>Deut. 21: 23</i>) "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." ¹⁰
(<i>Psa. 40: 6</i>) "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in; mine ears hast thou opened."	(<i>Heb. 10: 5</i>) "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body didst thou prepare for me."	(<i>Psa. 40: 6</i>) "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body didst thou prepare for me."
(<i>Amos 9: 12</i>) "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations that are	(<i>Acts 15: 17</i>) "That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles,	(<i>Amos 9: 12</i>) "That the residue of men may seek after (the Lord), and all the Gentiles,

⁸Quotations are taken from the American Standard Revised Version, checked with the Jewish Old Testament.

⁹"A reproach unto God" (Jewish).

¹⁰Verbal difference in the Greek.

called by my name, saith Jehovah that doeth this. ¹¹	upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who mak- eth these things known from of old." ¹²	upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."
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Such parallels might be greatly increased; but these will suffice to show the dependence of the writers of the New Testament upon the Greek Old Testament, the LXX. Most of the quotations from the Old Testament (but by no means all of them) in the New Testament give with considerable accuracy the sense of the original, where the Hebrew and the Greek agree; but where they differ, the New Testament writers, on the whole, follow the Greek, and base highly important arguments on elements in the Greek that are different (or even absent) from the Hebrew. Thus the Bible of the early Church, as of the synagogues of the Hellenistic Dispersion (and, to an extent, even in Palestine itself), was the Septuagint.

But was it the whole of the Septuagint, or was it strictly limited to the Greek version of those books, and only those books, that were finally included in the Canonical Scriptures of the Jews of Palestine? The writers of the earliest period have left us no specific answer to that question. In their first high enthusiasm it either did not occur to them, or it seemed too academic to enlist

¹¹ "Upon whom my name is called" (Jewish Bible).

¹² "Or, who doeth these things, which were known," etc. (A. R. V., margin).

their interest or demand an answer. They had and used their "Sacred Scriptures" (an Old Testament) much as we have and use "The Bible," with an important difference. Our Bible, through the development of the art of the book-maker—flat books, printed, and bound in one volume—has assumed a material outline and solidity that give it a good degree of definiteness. When a Protestant Christian speaks of "The Bible," though he may know nothing of its history, nor even the names of the several books that compose it, he nevertheless means a single specific book.¹³ But in earlier days, when the Bible did not have this mechanical unity but was a collection of separate rolls, there was no such certainty of its limits. Whether more or fewer rolls were included in it was a matter of definition or of usage, and if these were lacking or inconclusive, the whole question of the contents of "The Bible" was thrown open and might be answered in different ways by several groups.

Such were the conditions in the period of which we speak. We can say that "the law and the prophets" were in all Bibles. We can say that the earliest Christians used the Greek Bible, beginning with the writers of our New Testament, and that means that they used the Greek and not the Hebrew form of these common books. But even the Greek Bible was not clearly or exclusively defined; and probably the best statement of the situation would be: The Bible of the early Church

¹³ The Romanist also means a single specific book, but one of different contents (see Chap. I). This difference goes back to the situation now under discussion.

was the LXX, with no very clear or common idea of the exact limits of its contents.

Besides the express quotations from the Old Testament already considered, the New Testament contains (1) a few express citations as Scripture of passages not found in the Jewish canonical books, and (2) a great many vaguer references to Old Testament books, both within and without the Jewish Canon.

1 Corinthians 2: 9 introduces with the words "as it is written" (regularly used to cite canonical Scriptures), a quotation that Origen says (On Matthew 27: 9) is derived from the pseudepigraphical work, "The Apocalypse of Elijah."

**Apocryphal
Books**

Ephesians 5: 14 quotes an unknown source with the regular "He (or, It) saith," used to introduce Scripture quotations; and Ephiphanius says (Haer. 43) that the quotation is derived from this same Apocalypse of Elijah.

John 7: 38, and James 4: 5, cite "as the Scripture saith" passages that have no adequate or identifiable equivalent in any known source. And one should include here the puzzling passages: Matthew 2: 23; 27: 9; Luke 11: 49.

Jude 14 introduces a quotation from the book of Enoch (1: 9) with the words: "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied," not only regarding Enoch as a prophet, but regarding the book of Enoch as his work. And Clement of Alexandria (Comment on Jude) and Origen (De Prin. III, 2, 1) say that v. 9 is derived from the "Assumption of Moses."

Quotations

Whatever we may do with the unlocated quotations, or with the statements of the fathers concerning "The Apocalypse of Elijah," the case of "Enoch" is quite specific, and that book was widely regarded as Scripture in the early Church,¹⁴ and exercised a profound and widespread influence even upon the New Testament writers. As Professor Sanday says, "it definitely prevents us from saying that no Apocryphal Book is recognized by a Canonical writer"¹⁵; and this whole section points plainly towards a less exclusive and less sharply defined Old Testament than ours, and is thus quite in line with the other indications pointing in the same direction.

Besides these express quotations in the New Testa-

¹⁴ Charles even says: "Enoch's acceptance among Christians as a Messianic prophet was the ground of his rejection among the Jews; and although, prior to A.D. 40, he was the chief figure, next to Daniel, in Jewish Apocalyptic, in subsequent Jewish literature his functions and achievements are assigned to others, such as Moses, Ezra, Baruch. . . . In patristic literature Enoch is twice cited as Scripture by Barnabas. It is also quoted with approval" by several others in the second and third centuries.

¹⁵ "But the quotation from the Book of Enoch is quite unequivocal, and it definitely prevents us from saying that no Apocryphal Book is recognized by a Canonical writer. In this, as in so many other things, it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line, though in any case the use of the Apocrypha bears a very small proportion to that of the Old Testament, and in respect to spiritual authority enters into no sort of competition with it" (Inspiration, p. 95). The latter part of this statement is correct as far as direct quotations are concerned, but it rather discounts the more general influence and use and the doctrinal contributions of the Apocrypha.

ment from Apocryphal books, there is a surprising extension of evidence of their use which shows that, though not often actually cited as "Scripture," they were more used by the New Testament writers, and more influential, than many of the books now included in our Canon.

Moffatt's "Introduction" (p. 25 f.) furnishes a brief digest of this evidence. Here it will suffice to mention two or three cases by way of illustration.

(1) The Book of Enoch, as we have seen, is actually cited as Scripture by Jude. But that by no means exhausts the evidence of its use, whether in Jude or elsewhere in the New Testament. Jude's "account of the Fall of the Angels is taken directly from the book of Enoch, which is itself an expansion from Jewish and Gentile sources of the strange narrative contained in Genesis 6: 1-4,"¹⁶ and Professor R. H. Charles even says that its "influence on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseud-epigraphical books taken together."¹⁷

(2) The Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) was in the LXX, and from it passed into the oldest derived versions of the Old Testament of the second and third centuries of the Christian era, and is preserved (as a book of the O. T.) in our two oldest Greek manuscripts of the Bible, the Vatican and the Sinaitic codices, dating from the middle of the fourth century. This book, says Profes-

¹⁶ J. B. Mayor, Commentary on Jude and 2 Peter, p. clviii.

¹⁷ "Enoch," pp. 41-49.

sor Moore,¹⁸ describing the Jewish attitude in the first century, "was well known in the Tannaite period (down to about 200 A.D.) and later, highly esteemed and not infrequently quoted, sometimes with the formula usual with quotations from the Bible. It was, in fact, found necessary sometime about the end of the first century of our era to make a formal deliverance to the effect that it was not sacred Scripture. This did not imply any depreciation of the book itself; it was sufficient that it was written at a time when, with the death of the last prophets, the inspiration of biblical books had ceased." But it was in the Greek Old Testament of the Hellenistic Dispersion and of the early Church, and it has left broad traces in the early Christian literature, including the New Testament.¹⁹

(3) "Next to Enoch and Sirach," says Moffatt, "no writing of later Judaism had such a vogue within the early Church as the Wisdom of Solomon, which . . . was almost universally regarded as a divine and prophetic Scripture."²⁰ It, too, like Sirach, appears in ancient versions and manuscripts of the Old Testament; and in our earliest orthodox Christian Canon (about 190 A.D.) it is specified, under a confusing title, along with Jude and two epistles of John, as "received in the catholic church"; and Adeney says of it (and of Sirach,

¹⁸ Judaism, I, 45. Compare I, 86 and 243, cited above.

¹⁹ If the reader will consult Mayor's Commentary on James (LXXII-LXXVI), he will find cited, for that Epistle, as many reminiscences of, and points of contact with, Sirach, as with all the canonical prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, inclusive.

²⁰ Introduction, p. 26.

above) that "both Wisdom and Sirach were known to Matthew, Luke, and John. . . . and that our Lord seems to have made use of both books."²¹

The New Testament, then, shows:

(a) That some of the books of our Old Testament are never formally cited by the New Testament writers;

N. T. Summary

(b) That there are a few formal quotations from "Scriptures" not identifiable with any writings in our Old Testament, and that, among these, those that can be certainly or probably identified are derived from extra-canonical books, within and without the LXX;

(c) That even the more general references to "The Writings" show no traces of some books,²² and are mainly limited to Psalms and Daniel;

(d) That some books that are not included in the Jewish or the Protestant Old Testaments, though not formally cited, were well known to the New Testament writers, and exercised a considerable and widespread influence upon them.²³

(B) And these phenomena are quite in line with the usage of the earliest Christian fathers outside of the New Testament, except that, in their case, the matter becomes too clear to admit of denial. If we could put out

²¹ Hastings, *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, I, 101a.

²² Even Ryle says: "The three 'disputed' books, Esther, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes, receive from the New Testament no support, either by quotation or by allusion, for their place among the Canonical Scriptures" (*Canon O. T.*, p. 162).

²³ A consideration of the doctrinal contributions of this non-canonical literature will greatly emphasize these conclusions.

of our minds the distinction created in early Christian literature by the later canonization of the books of our New Testament, we should see that the usage of the whole literature in this matter is of one and the same piece. "The law, the prophets, and the psalms" dominated the field. Besides these there are other "Scriptures," not sharply defined, but more numerous than the Jewish "Writings." Thus:

The Fathers

(a) Clement of Rome, as the head of the Roman Church, wrote a letter to the Church in Corinth in 95 A.D. This letter was sometimes itself regarded as New Testament Scripture (see below); it is included in the New Testament in the codex Alexandrinus (5th century); and its author was supposed by some of the later fathers to have written our "Epistle to the Hebrews." It is the earliest piece of Christian literature

**Clement of
Rome**

outside of the New Testament that has survived to us, and was written before there was any New Testament Canon, and even before some of the books now in our New Testament were themselves written. Besides his quotations from "the law, the prophets, and the psalms," Clement has eleven others, as follows, Proverbs, 5; Job, 4; and one each from Daniel and The Wisdom of Solomon.

To these results, which are remarkably like those already set forth, should be added the facts that there are several quotations in Clement from unidentifiable sources, and that he treats the story of "the blessed Judith" exactly as he treats the story of Esther (55).

In sections 59, 60 we have a catena of passages (mostly a phrase or two in each case) put together without any

indication of source, and without any discrimination, from Isaiah, Psalms, Job, Isaiah, 1 Samuel, Deuteronomy, *Sirach*, Judges, Psalms, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Psalms, *Sirach*, Psalms, 1 Kings, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Exodus, Psalms.

(b) The Didaché, or "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," was written about 100-125 A.D., and thus falls within the period of the composition of the New Testament, and prior to the formation of the New Testament Canon. It was itself regarded as New Testament Scripture by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and the Church in Alexandria. It shows groups of passages similar to the last cited from Clement of Rome. Thus: Jeremiah, Matthew, Leviticus, *Tobit*, Matthew, and Luke (1); and Hebrews, *Sirach*, Acts (4): and no distinction is made between the canonical and the apocryphal books.

(c) The so-called Epistle of Barnabas, written about 130 A.D., was also regarded as Scripture in Alexandria, and appears in the New Testament in our oldest Greek manuscript of the Bible, the Sinaitic codex (of about 350 A.D.). It follows the same practice that we have seen in Clement of Rome and the Didaché. Thus, it cites (16) Isaiah, *Enoch*, Daniel, and introduces the quotation from Enoch with the regular formula for quoting canonical Scripture, "For the Scripture says." And again (19) it shows: Exodus, Isaiah, Exodus, Acts, *Sirach*, Hebrews, with no distinction between the command quoted from *Sirach* 4: 31 and the commands quoted from the books in our canonical Scriptures.

(This Sirach command is the one also cited above in the Didaché).

If these passages, from Christian works contemporaneous with the later books of the New Testament, works themselves regarded in various quarters as New Testament Scripture, be compared with the usage of the New Testament writers, it will be seen, as has been said, that the usage is all of one piece. All of our earliest Christian literature (including the New Testament) supports the conclusion that the Bible of the earliest Christians, though it lacked sharpness and finality of definition, was The Septuagint, including the variant material that distinguished it from the Jewish Canon as finally defined at the close of the first century. "To Tertullian and Cyprian, as well as to Clement and Barnabas, Justin and Irenaeus, the Septuagint was the Old Testament authorized by the Church, and no appeal lay either to any other version or to the original. Nor was this tradition readily abandoned by the few who attained to some knowledge of Hebrew. . . . Jerome (who died in 420 A.D.) was long in reaching his resolve to adopt the Hebrew text as the basis of his new Latin version, and when at length he did so, his decision exposed him to obloquy. Augustine, while sympathizing with Jerome's purpose, thought it a doubtful policy to unsettle the laity by lowering the authority of the LXX."²⁴ This will be found important for our further study.

²⁴Swete, 1. c., p. 464.

CHAPTER V

IN HEBREW, AND IN GREEK, AND IN LATIN

THE beginning of the second century of our era saw the Hebrew Canon defined and closed, containing the same books that the Hebrew Bible and the Protestant Old Testaments now contain. It saw the early Church and the synagogues of the Hellenistic Dispersion in possession of the Septuagint, which contained the books of the Hebrew Canon, sometimes without Esther, and a scarcely defined surplus of additional books and parts of books. But it was not long before this joint use of the Septuagint became impossible. Owing partly to the fact that the LXX really did not correctly represent the received Hebrew text, but more, probably, to the fact that the Christians made effective controversial use of it in support of their positions, the Jews abandoned that Version and adopted the new Greek Version made by the proselyte Aquila of Pontus about 130 A.D. This was a polemic version, following the principles and practice of the rabbis, and "its purpose was to set aside the interpretation of the LXX in so far as it appeared to support the views of the Christian Church" (Swete). Henceforth the LXX became the exclusive property of the Church, and continued to be its only Bible until, on the one hand, it was enlarged by the addition of a New Testament and, on the other, linguistic necessities called for versions in other tongues.

This second century was, in many ways, a crucial

period in the history of the Church. Both from without and from within it was a period of clarification, definition, change. The Church was now sharply differentiated from Judaism, and was rapidly developing its own organization. Prophetic leadership gave place to official authority, which, as Lindsey points out, was a veritable revolution in the structure and character of the Church. The Bishop ceased to be a functional elder, and became a distinct superior officer, successor of the Apostles, representative of Christ and of God; and the Church passed from a diffused and rather inchoate prophetic movement, with its eyes upon the world to come, into an official organization in this world, presided over by a bishop who was in a class apart, of a different and higher order than his flock.

**Isolation and
Organiza-
tion of the
Church**

Diversities within the Church threatened its integrity and continuity, and forced the sharpening of its definition. Our Apostles' Creed, in the earlier form of the old Roman Symbol, which dates from about the middle of the second century, is the orthodox answer to threatening Gnostic views;¹ and the churches that accepted this ancient Symbol, rather, the churches whose faith was embodied in this ancient Symbol, were thus both separated from the churches that rejected it and drawn closer together around this brief statement of their own common faith.

**Apostles'
Creed**

By the middle of the second century, too, the Chris-

¹See below, chapter 11.

tian movement had created its own literature, in addition to that which it had brought over from the Hellenistic synagogue, and there were various attitudes towards this literature, both the original and the borrowed. There were some (the Gnostics) who proposed to reject the Old Testament entirely, some who, in regard to the New Testament, would have nothing of Paul (Jewish Christians), and some (Gnostics, again) who would have nothing but Paul. This brought the Church face to face with the question what literature it should receive and sanction.² It responded by steadfastly adhering to the Old Testament and ultimately sanctioning the composite New Testament that we have to-day.

At this time the literature of the Church was in Greek. The Old Testament which it refused to give up had hitherto been the Septuagint, which it had received from and shared with the Hellenistic synagogue, but which had now become, as we have seen, its exclusive property. But the Septuagint had simply been taken over from the Hellenistic synagogue, without critical examination or definition of its proper contents, and it held its place by general acceptance and common use. It was now rejected by the Jews, and none of its surplus

² The books now contained in our New Testament had all been written by the middle of the second century, but the process of their canonization was just beginning. That process can be traced back to this time and this situation, but the account of it belongs to a later chapter. Here we are concerned only with the effect of the situation upon the Old Testament.

books was included in their finished and official Canon. Palestinian Judaism now had a defined Canon, the loyal Hellenistic Jew had that Canon in Aquila's Greek Version, and that Canon was sharply distinguished from the Septuagint. But there was as yet no Christian definition of the Church's Old Testament.

The question thus assumed, both from within and from without, a new phase. The Church would not give up the Old Testament, but what was the Old Testament to which it would adhere? If the Church was to have definite and distinctive standards, and the Old Testament was to be included in them, the Old Testament needed to be defined. Consequently, men now began to inquire concerning the contents of the Hebrew Old Testament, and to recognize the differences between it and the current Greek; and this recognition of differences passed over into a definite, if irregular, tendency on the part of certain leaders of the Church to limit the Christian Old Testament to the Jewish Canon, and to depress or reject the additional books of the Septuagint. And the interaction of this tendency and the older common use issued in very irregular and confusing results, which were never reduced to complete uniformity in the East, and, in the West, finally gave rise to two different Old Testaments, the Romish and the Protestant.

(1) In the East, our earliest Christian list of the books of the Old Testament is provided by a fragment of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, about 180 A.D. His list "probably represents the contents of the Palestinian

**The Oldest
Christian
List**

Greek Bible" of his time and earlier, which Westcott supposes was "the Greek Bible which was used by our Lord and the Apostles." Ignoring some minor variations, we may say that Melito's list is the Hebrew Canon, as Jews and Protestants now receive it, lacking the book of Esther. But the point of chief importance here is the interest in the Hebrew Canon, with the implication of a recognition of its superiority.

Origen of Alexandria, the greatest scholar of the early Church, has also left us a list of the books of the Old Testament "according to the Hebrews." This is a recognition of difference; but it is not Origen's idea that this knowledge of the Hebrew Canon should issue in its acceptance in place of the Greek. Christians ought to have this information, he says, "in order that, in our debates with the Jews, we may not bring forward against them matter that is not included in their Scriptures." In other words, he wants to confute the Jews from the Scriptures that they accept and not complicate the debate with any preliminary questions as to whether passages used are Scripture or not. For himself and the Church, he accepts and defends the use of the LXX, "on the ground that the Alexandrian Bible had received the sanction of the Church, and that to reject its testimony would be to revolutionize her Canon of the Old Testament, and to play into the hands of her Jewish adversaries. In this matter it was well, he urged, to bear in mind the precept of Proverbs 2: 28, "Remove not the ancient landmarks, which thy fathers have set" (Swete).

A century and a half later, however, Athanasius of Alexandria takes a different view of the ancient landmarks. He makes a value-distinction between the books of the Hebrew Canon and the additional books of the LXX, assigning a superior authority to the former.³ And yet even his list is not exactly identical with the Jewish; for he includes First Ezra and Baruch (including the Epistle of Jeremiah), which the Jews never received, among the canonical books, and reckons Esther among the Apocrypha.

The lists approved by Eastern Councils do not resolve this difficulty, nor remove the general vagueness and confusion by clear and consistent definitions.

If we pass by the (later) list attached to the decree of the little Council of Laodicea on the reading of none but canonical books in the services of the Church (363 A.D., the list is substantially that of the Hebrew Canon), the crucial Eastern Council in this matter was the Quinisextine, or Trullan, Council of Constantinople, held in 692 A.D., and still recognized as authoritative in the Greek Church. That a pronouncement on the Canon seemed required at so late a date vividly indicates the undetermined condition of the Canon at the time. But if we look for clearness of decision and definition in the decrees of this Council, we shall be disappointed. For the Council ratified (*a*) the Laodicean Canons; (*b*) the so-called Apostolic Canons, which only partially conform to the Hebrew; and (*c*) the

³ In his Easter Letter of 367 A.D. The latter books "are not canonical."

Canons of Carthage, which, as we shall see, go back to the Greek and specifically define the Canon in terms of the Greek and not of the Hebrew.

This is typical of the confusion that existed in the East. Indeed, as Westcott says, "Not one of the Eastern Bibles contained exactly the books which we receive and these only . . . no less than six different lists of the Scriptures were received there more or less widely in the tenth century."⁴

Our oldest actually extant Bibles are of Eastern origin, and come from the very time when leaders of the church were trying to define the Old Testament in terms of the Hebrew Canon. They are the great vellum manuscript Bibles:⁵

**The Oldest
Bibles**

(a) *The Codex Vaticanus* (B), now preserved in Rome, but originating probably in Alexandria about the middle of the fourth century of our era;

⁴ Bi. in the Ch., p. 227. "In no one of the Eastern Churches was there any fixed judgment or consistent tradition as to its contents. The Hebrew Canon itself was not universally accepted. Esther, indeed, was on the whole less supported than Baruch" (243).

⁵ It should be observed that the use of flat books in place of the roll form, and of parchment (preferably antelope skins) in place of the earlier papyrus, which dates from the third century A.D., possibly even earlier, was of great importance for the collection, preservation, and practical definition of the Scriptures. It made possible the bringing together of numerous books in a single volume, greatly promoted the ease and convenience of the use of that volume, provided for its long life, and, finally, gave the whole the fixed mechanical unity and singularity that we see in modern books. All of these things were lacking, as we have seen (above, p. 71), in the earlier forms of the Scriptures.

(b) *The Codex Sinaiticus* (*Aleph*), now in Leningrad (some leaves in Leipzig), originating also, probably, in Alexandria and of the fourth century;

(c) *The Codex Alexandrinus* (*A*), now in London, but originating in Constantinople about the middle of the fifth century.

These may be taken as representative of the practice of the East at the time of their production. And none of them shows any influence of the post-Origenic theory of the limitation of the Canon to the Hebrew books.⁶ They all include most of the excess books of the Greek Canon, and thus show the vitality and persistence of the earlier usage of the church. This may be seen from the following table of their contents (showing here the Old Testament only):

Codex Vaticanus	Codex Sinaiticus	Codex Alexandrinus
Genesis	Genesis	Genesis
Exodus	 ⁷	Exodus
Leviticus	.....	Leviticus
Numbers	Numbers	Numbers
Deuteronomy	.....	Deuteronomy
Joshua	.....	Joshua
Judges	.....	Judges
Ruth	.....	Ruth
Kingdoms, four	.....	Kingdoms, four
Chronicles, two	Chronicles 1 (2)	Chronicles, two
Ezra 1 and 2	Ezra (1), 2	Hosea
Psalms (+151)	Esther, <i>with addi-</i>	Amos
Proverbs	<i>tions</i>	Micah
Ecclesiastes	<i>Tobit</i>	Joel

⁶ The Syriac version of the Old Testament, also, the Peshitta, contained most of the books of the larger Greek canon.

⁷ These leaders represent gaps in the manuscript.

THE BIBLES OF THE CHURCHES

Song	<i>Judith</i>	Obadiah
Job	<i>Maccabees 1, 4</i>	Jonah
<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	Isaiah	Nahum
<i>Wisdom of Sirach</i>	Jeremiah	Habakkuk
Esther, with additions	Lamentations	Zephaniah
<i>Judith</i>	.....	Haggai
<i>Tobit</i>	.....	Zechariah
Hosea	.....	Malachi
Amos	.....	Isaiah
Micah	.....	Jeremiah
Joel	Joel	<i>Baruch</i>
Obadiah	Obadiah	Lamentations
Jonah	Jonah	<i>Epistle of</i>
Nahum	Nahum	<i>Jeremiah</i>
Habakkuk	Habakkuk	Ezekiel
Zephaniah	Zephaniah	Daniel, with additions
Haggai	Haggai	Esther, with additions
Zechariah	Zechariah	<i>Tobit</i>
Malachi	Malachi	<i>Judith</i>
Isaiah	Psalms	<i>1 Ezra</i>
Jeremiah	Proverbs	<i>2 Ezra</i>
<i>Baruch</i>	Ecclesiastes	<i>Maccabees, four</i>
Lamentations	Song of Songs	The Psalter (151 + Odes)
<i>Epistle of Jeremiah</i>	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>	<i>Job</i>
Ezekiel	<i>Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach</i>	Proverbs
Daniel, with additions	Job	Ecclesiastes
		Song of Songs
		<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>
		<i>Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach</i> and (after the N. T.)
		<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>

These are actually surviving Greek Bibles of the century 350-450 A.D. They all contain (or contained)

all of the Hebrew books; but they all contain a surplus over those books. And if we may follow the high example of the Trullan Council, we should say that this is the actual Bible of the early Eastern Church, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, rather than any theoretical Book defined by the learning of any of the leaders of the Church; and this was its only Bible before the canonization of the New Testament.

(2) In the West, due to the centrality and supremacy of the Roman Church, the course of events is simpler and more consistent, and the final result quite definite. And the history of the Canon is wrapped up in the history of the Latin Versions.

One section of the Roman Empire had largely and conspicuously escaped the wide Hellenization of the Mediterranean world. The impress of the older Latin Carthage Rome was early and deeply set in Carthage and its territory (the Roman Province of Africa), so that, when even Rome could be sneered at as "a Greek city," Carthage, though not untouched, remained the most generally and the most genuinely Latin of all the great centers of the Empire. Latin was there the language of common intercourse, and he who would secure a hearing in the Province of Africa must address it in that tongue.

Expanding Christianity, as we have seen, carried with it the Septuagint, which was the Church's only Bible. But the Septuagint was in Greek, and was therefore practically a sealed book to converts in this Latin Province. To meet this difficulty the Septuagint (and Greek

The Bible in
Latin

Christian writings) was translated into Latin. We do not know just where, or by whom this was done; but the time was about 150 A.D., or a little later. This Old Latin Bible therefore contained (some, if not all of) the surplus of the Greek Old Testament over the Hebrew, and thus delivered to the Latin-speaking Church the Bible originally received from the Hellenistic synagogue.

In the East, Greek continued to live. In the West, on the other hand, it soon began to fade out, and was rapidly supplanted by Latin as the language of the Western Church, and the Western world; and it was not very long before not only the Christian use but the very knowledge of Greek disappeared from the West, to return at last only with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. By the end of the fourth century Latin was the language of the West, and the Latin Bible was the Bible of the Western Church. The West had set out on its own way, and that was West and not East, Latin and not Greek or Hebrew.

With the decay of Greek and the spread of Latin in the centuries from 200 to 400 A.D., the inadequacy of the current Old Latin Version (or versions) became more and more manifest in the more cultured and influential circles of the Church. It needed to be corrected and modernized in a single "revised version," that should take the place of the many varying and antiquated copies that were in use and become the common Bible of the Latin-speaking Church.

**Latin Dom-
inant**

**The Old Latin
Revised:
Jerome**

Pope Damasus (366-384 A.D.) undertook to bring about this revision, and committed the actual work to his learned secretary and friend, Jerome (Eusebius Sofronius Hieronymus, d. 420 A.D.). It was a delicate and difficult matter to attempt to change, even for the better, the Scriptures that the people had been reading and hearing in the churches for two hundred

How Received and fifty years. Jerome saw this quite clearly.⁸ Nevertheless he undertook the task, and during the next six or seven years (383-390) completed and issued his revision of the canonical books. But, despite its worthy purpose and conservative method, Jerome's work was not at first well received by the Church at large. With some conspicuous exceptions, the general attitude was one of suspicion and hostility: Jerome was a perverter of the Scriptures, a denier of their inspiration, unrestrained even in his treatment of words of the Lord Jesus.

But Jerome continued his work; and mere revision, whether approved or censured, did not satisfy him.

A New Translation His work on the LXX, coupled with his increasing knowledge of Hebrew, deepened his sense of the inadequacy of the Greek as well as of a Latin translation of it. And he at once pro-

⁸ In the Dedicatory Preface to the revision of the Gospels, addressed to Damasus, he says: "The labor is one of love, but at the same time both perilous and presumptuous. . . . Is there a man, learned or unlearned, who, when he takes the volume into his hands and perceives that what he reads does not suit his settled tastes . . . will not call me a forger and a profane person?" (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 6, 487.)

ceeded, without any official sanction, to make a new translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew (390-405), which must necessarily come into conflict both with the Latin versions and with the Greek version from which they were made.

In the very nature of the case, such a work might very well be limited to the books contained in the Hebrew

The Hebrew Canon Canon. But such a mechanical restriction, though justifiable enough, does not adequately explain Jerome's attitude and purpose. He had long recognized the Hebrew books as alone canonical, the only Scripture in the proper sense. And his deliberate purpose now was to substitute the Hebrew for the Greek Canon in the acceptance and usage of the Western Church. It is not then surprising that his new work was received with much deeper and more widespread antagonism than had marked the reception of his revision of the Old Latin. Nevertheless, it ultimately won through to a general, if irregular and divided, acceptance. As a translation, it now provides the basis and the bulk of the Romish Bible, while the Protestant Churches generally have adopted its limitation of the Canon.

Jerome's attitude toward the Canon was influenced by the earlier Alexandrine scholarship and was similar to that of some of his contemporaries in the Eastern Church,⁹ but it was not effective in changing the common and ancient use of the Church. The Latin fathers,

⁹ But with greater clearness and exactness in Jerome. He excluded from the Canon all the Apocrypha, the Eastern fathers generally admitted one or more.

indeed, not to mention the masses of the people, were

Refused almost all against Jerome in this matter.

He might depress the non-Hebrew books, and refuse to include them in the Canon, but they were in the Old Latin Bible, and in its Greek source, and the Church would not give them up.

Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430 A.D.) was the greatest contemporary leader, and the best representative of the prevailing tendency, in the Latin Church. "No single name has ever exercised

Augustine such power over the Christian Church, and

no one mind ever made such an impression upon Christian thought." In the matter of the Canon of the Old Testament, he was, like many of his contemporaries, not altogether clear and consistent, but in effect he threw the great weight of his influence against Jerome, and was thus largely, if not wholly, responsible for the fixation of the Old Latin rather than the Hebrew Canon in the West.

The basis of Augustine's decision was the usage of the Christian Churches. "In the matter of the canonical Scriptures," he says, "the most skillful investigator is to follow the authority of the greatest possible number of

Catholic Churches, among which certainly

**How to De-
termine
Canonicity** are those which deserved to have Apostolic Sees and to receive Apostolic letters. He

will follow this plan then in (determining) the canonical Scriptures: He will prefer those which are received by all Catholic Churches to those which some (Churches) do not receive; but in the case of those (Scriptures) which are not received by all, he will pre-

fer those which the more numerous and weighty Churches receive to those which Churches fewer in number and of less authority hold to. But if he find some held by more numerous, others by more weighty, Churches, though this he cannot easily find, I think that such Scriptures must be held of equal authority." And the application of these principles gives him, as one would expect, the current Latin Bible.

Augustine's view is also reflected in the decision of the Council of Carthage, in which he was a leading figure.

Council of Carthage The Third Council of Carthage, in 397 A.D., gives our first genuine list of "canonical Scriptures" approved by any Council (on the Laodicean list, see above). This was not an Ecumenical Council: there was, indeed, no Ecumenical decision on the Canon until that of Trent in 1546; but the decision of Carthage both contributed to the fixation of opinion and usage in the West and represents the dominant ecclesiastical tendency down to the time of its taking over and incorporation in the decision of Trent.¹⁰ Its decision (repeated in the Fifth Council in 419 A.D.) provides "that nothing but the canonical Scriptures shall be read in the church under the name of divine Scriptures. . . . But the Passions of the martyrs may be read when their anniversaries are celebrated." Between these two sentences, we find: "These are the canonical Scriptures:

Genesis

Twelve books of Prophets

Exodus

(i.e., Book of the Twelve)

¹⁰ Which, however, omitted the Greek Ezra, printing it as an appendix.

Leviticus	Isaiah
Numbers	Jeremiah
Deuteronomy	Ezekiel
Joshua	Daniel
Judges	<i>Tobit</i>
Ruth	<i>Judith</i>
Kingdoms, four	Esther
Chronicles, two	Ezra, 1 and 2
Job	<i>Maccabees, two</i> "
Psalms of David	
Five books of Solomon ¹¹	

In addition to the books here specified that are not in the Hebrew Canon, this list means to include under "Jeremiah," "Daniel," and "Esther" the additional matter that appears in the Greek and the Latin forms of those books, but not in the Hebrew.

The oldest extant Latin Bibles reflect the judgment of Augustine and the Council of Carthage. They conserve the Church's primitive heritage from the Hellenistic synagogue; and the restrictive opinions of leaders, East or West, were not able to reduce these Bibles to the limits of the Hebrew Canon.

Greek Canon Prevails On the contrary, such conciliar authority as there was repudiated these novel opinions and confirmed the larger Bibles of ancient and common use. The Council of Carthage, in the Latin Church, sanctioned this larger Canon; and the later Trullan Council, for the Greek Church, approved

¹¹ These are Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song, and *Wisdom of Solomon*, and *Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)*, which last was frequently included in the corpus of books attributed to Solomon.

the decision of the Council of Carthage, though this Trullan decision is confused and confusing. And thus, theoretically at least, Greek and Latin Canons of the Old Testament were made identical, and both contained more books than were contained in the Hebrew Canon.

And yet the situation lacked finality. Actual Bibles varied more or less from one another: conciliar decisions

**Conditions Not
Uniform or
Final** were not universally binding, even if they were clear and unequivocal: opinions of Church leaders were not uniform, nor, even within the broad divisions of pro- and anti-Hebrew, were they clear, consistent, and agreed. The Church had an Old Testament that was practically satisfactory, of substantially uniform limits, and larger than the Hebrew; but neither scientifically nor by competent authority had its exact limits been officially and universally determined. In this uncertain and unstable state the Canon went into the Middle Ages, and in the same state it emerged from them.

CHAPTER VI

THE REFORMATION—"THE OLD THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, THEY ARE BECOME NEW"

WE pass over a thousand years with a word.

The founding of Constantinople in 330 A.D., and the actual division of the Roman Empire at the close of the century accentuated the differences between the East and the West, and set each section forward upon its own course of development. For a time it was a question whether the patriarch of the "New Rome," supported by imperial patronage and location, or the Bishop of Rome, supported by the claim of apostolic succession and the apostolic See, should be the head of the Church. But Innocent I (402-417), "upon whose mind seems first distinctly to have dawned the vast conception of Rome's universal ecclesiastical supremacy" (Milman), soon laid down the proposition (415) that the establishment of a new capital could not affect the unity of the Church nor impair the supremacy of Rome as the "head of all the Churches."¹ This headship, being based upon the apostolic succession of the pope and the fact that Rome was the chief apostolic See, scene of the last labors and death both of Peter and of Paul, had a divine foundation and could not be impaired by any human act. Through all the vicissitudes of the centuries this

Rome Su-
preme

¹ Below, chapter 11.

thesis survived, and, at a date important for our study, was reasserted by the Council of Florence (1439) in these words: "We define the holy apostolic See and the Roman pontiff to have primacy over the whole earth, and the Roman pontiff to be himself the successor of the blessed Peter, chief of the apostles, and the true vicar of Christ, and to exist as head of the whole Church and father and teacher of all Christians; and that to him, in the blessed Peter, our Lord Jesus Christ has committed full power of feeding, governing, and directing the universal Church." In the West, at least, the Romish Church was *The Church* at the dawn of the Reformation, the depository of tradition, the definer and guardian of orthodoxy, the binder and looser for this world and the world to come; and any who denied its claims were schismatics and heretics.

Mediaeval thinking generally, especially ecclesiastical thinking, was dominated by the idea of authority, and "authority" was the tradition of the elders and the dicta of the Church as the depository, guardian, and interpreter of that tradition. The historic continuity of the faith—"that which was confirmed unto us by them that heard" (Heb. 2: 3)—of apostolic times, which had played an important part in the primitive controversies of the Church, had become a new tradition of the elders as fixed, as supreme, and as barren, as that older tradition against which Christianity had been at the first a dynamic and creative protest. Thinking was either prescribed or proscribed, and nothing that we now know as freedom and scholarship was tolerable or even conceivable in the Church.

The Reformation was only a partial break with this attitude. The vague and scattered promises that it gave, in some of its earliest exponents, of a complete break and a new attitude came to significant but only partial realization. And yet the "carry-over" of Mediævalism among the Reformers was so much less than that which obtained in the Church that the Reformation can only be regarded as a revolution in current ecclesiastical thinking and order, "a Teutonic revolt, intellectual no less than religious, against the traditions which the Latin Church in the course of centuries had invented and imposed on the faith and habits of thought of Western Christendom."² But "the Reformers themselves always maintained that the doctrines which they enforced rested on Scriptural precedent and primitive example." They appealed at an earlier and purer tradition against the (as they alleged) corruptions and usurpations of the later ages; and thus the Reformation was not a question of the ultimate nature and value of authority, but rather and simply of its location.

In the Church, the bitter controversy over the primacy of Pope or of Council had been recently settled in favor of the Pope. He was the supreme head of the Church, and his authority was of divine institution, the continuance in the succession of that which Jesus himself had bestowed upon Simon Peter (above). Under him were the four collateral and subordinate authorities, Scripture,

² Encyclopedia Britannica, Ninth Edition, 20, 320.

Creeds, Councils, and Fathers. Of all of these the Church, headed by the living representative of Christ himself, was the sole and sufficient custodian, interpreter, and guarantor. In it converged the "always, everywhere, and by everybody" which Vincent of Lerins (d. 450) had laid down as the determinant of belief.³ Its word was final: its authority supreme and unquestionable. The Reformers assailed this whole structure of ecclesiastical authority. They denied the Church's claim to supreme authority in both doctrine and discipline, and they appealed from this alleged authority of the Church to the authority of the Scriptures, which alone was supreme. It was this relocation of the center of authority in them as against the claims of the Church that brought the Scriptures into the ensuing controversy.

As long as the claim of the Roman Church was acknowledged, the question of the Scriptures was a subordinate one. The Church was the supreme authority; the Scriptures were only one source of its doctrine. And it was the prerogative of the Church both to define and to interpret them with its own final authority. There was naturally no right of appeal from the sanctioner (the Church) to the sanctioned (the Scriptures) whether in the matter of the proper contents or of the meaning of the Book. This same Vincent of Lerins had

**The Roman
Principle**

³ In his "Warning against the Profane Novelties of All Heretics" (434 A.D.): "That must be adhered to (tenendum) which has been believed always and everywhere and by everybody (*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, creditum est*)."

said that, on account of the number and variety of grievous errors, "it is necessary that the line of prophetic and apostolic interpretation be directed according to the norm of the ecclesiastical and catholic (universal?) sense." And that, too, even then, was not altogether new. For Tertullian of Carthage (d. 222) had said, "There are many words in the Divine Scriptures which can be turned to that sense which each individual presumes (to give them) for himself of his own accord; wherefore it is proper to learn the meaning (*intelligentiam*) of the Scriptures from him who preserves it according to the truth delivered to him by our elders," a sound enough proposition, if properly understood and applied. But since the Roman Church came to be the depository of "the truth delivered by our elders," this principle came to be a comprehensive denial of any right of private judgment in the interpretation even of the Scriptures which the Church received and sanctioned.⁴ On these principles the Romish Church met the whole movement of the Renaissance as it touched the authority of the Church and the Scriptures.⁵

⁴ Compare: "The literal sense is to be judged as the church inspired by the Holy Spirit has determined, and not according to the opinion of the individual" (Gershon, Chancellor of the University of Paris (d. 1429); and the decision of the Council of Trent (1546) quoted below.

⁵ Compare the Encyclical of Leo XIII (1885): "And so in such a difficult course of events, Catholics, if they hearken to us as they ought, will easily see what is their duty both in opinions and in acts. In thinking, indeed, whatever the Roman Pontiffs have delivered or shall deliver it is necessary that they both hold steadfastly and profess openly as often as occasion demands,

The earlier stages of the Renaissance, the restlessness before the dawn (1150-1450 A.D.), significant as they are, must not long detain us. And yet there are two or three things that ought to be said for the better understanding of the later history.

**The Begin-
ning of the
Renaissance**

(1) Dawning science was not popular in the Romish Church; but neither was it popular in the (later) Churches of the Reformers. In approach and method, not to mention growing content, it ran counter to deep and ancient principles of tradition and authority, on which, as principles, Romanists and Reformers were generally agreed. The Reformation represented only partially the intellectual side of the Renaissance; its sphere was primarily moral and spiritual.⁶ Symonds calls it "the Teutonic Renaissance," and says: "This new spirit in Italy emancipated intelligence by the classics; in Germany it emancipated the human conscience by the Bible."

Science

(2) The idea of the canon played little part in the thinking of the Church during the Middle Ages, naturally enough in view of what has been said above. But it is to be observed:

The Canon

(a) That the distinction that we saw in the last

and especially in what they call "liberties," they must stand upon the judgment of the apostolic See."

⁶ "The Reformation itself could not proceed from those who saw the highest attainment of the new spirit in the sphere of literary culture, and who lacked both the courage to attain greater results and the insight to see that taste and science could not make the world better" (Reuss, *Hist. of N. T.*, II, 562).

chapter between academic theory and the common use (Jerome *vs.* Augustine) reappears in several quarters in the later centuries. Indeed, that distinction had never wholly disappeared; but it becomes more conspicuous with the approach of the new day. Quite in the earlier manner of Jerome, the books of the Hebrew canon are given a place of their own as constituting the only fully and properly canonical books. The apocryphal books "are read, indeed, but are not written in the canon" (Hugo of St. Victor, d. 1141 A.D.), and in this same class are now included the writings of the Church fathers. But such cases are still exceptional, and quite barren of general results: they are no more than scattered echoes of an earlier tradition; and yet they deserve mention as standing between that earlier day and the later decisions of the Reformers. In the Church in general, "the distinction between canonical and apocryphal had vanished" (Reuss).

(b) That the ancient gnostic denial of parts or all of the Old Testament, which, also, had never wholly died out, but which became conspicuous again in several parts of Europe in the twelfth century,⁷ raised again a question of the canon that, as in earlier days, was again repudiated by the Church. The attitude of these groups toward the canon was only a part of their larger heresy (a neo-Manicheism); but the whole was met and destroyed with what now seems to us incredible violence and cruelty.

One must acknowledge here, as in the matter of

⁷ See reference works under "Albigenses," "Bulgarians," "Cathari," etc.

"Science," above mentioned, that the persecution of heretics, the violent suppression of divergent opinions, was not the monopoly of the Romish Church. When the Reformers came into power, they did the same sort of thing, less, indeed, in degree, but not different in kind. In extenuation of both alike, it should be pointed out that it was an age of violence. The use of force in what was regarded as a good cause seemed both natural and right. The Reformation did not win at once complete liberty either of intellect or of conscience. But persecution is contrary to the genius of Protestantism; and the very standards by which we now condemn this ancient violence are the fruit of the Reformation at work in the field of conscience rather than of the Renaissance in the field of the intellect.⁸

(3) Three times in the thirteenth century the possession and use of the Bible—the Bible as defined by the Romish Church, of course—was prohibited to the laity.

⁸ Compare Wesley's Notes on the New Testament: "As for the popish sense (of heretic), 'A man that errs in fundamentals,' although it crept with many other things early into the church, yet it has no shadow of foundation, either in the Old or New Testament" (on Titus, 3, 10). And, again, "So wonderfully have later ages distorted the words heresy and schism from their Scriptural meaning. Heresy is not, in all the Bible, taken for 'An error in fundamentals,' or in anything else; nor schism, for any separation from the outward communion of others. Therefore both heresy and schism, in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture knows nothing of; but were invented merely to deprive mankind of the benefit of private judgment, and liberty of conscience" (on 1 Cor. 11: 18).

**The Bible
Forbidden**

The fourteenth Canon of the Council of Toulouse (1229) gives the mildest of these restrictions. "We prohibit," it says, "the laity to have the books of the Old Testament or of the New, unless perhaps one wish to have a Psalter or a Breviary for divine services, or, out of his devotion, wish to have the Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And we strictly prohibit them from having these permitted books translated in the common tongue." Such fragmentary and inadequate vernacular Bibles as were then available bred discontent, and so threatened the sovereignty of the Church. They must therefore be taken out of the hands of those whose loyalty and subserviency they might disturb.

**Its Contents
Specified**

(4) In a Bull in 1441, the Pope Eugene IV published a list of the Scriptures "received and venerated by the Holy Roman Church."⁹ The authority of the ecumenical Council of Florence is claimed for this list, but, as Westcott points out, erroneously. The list, however, correctly represents the judgment of the Roman Church on the question and foreshadows the undisputed and final decision of the ecumenical Council of Trent a century later (see below). The list is a repetition of the list of the ancient Council of Carthage, of the letter of Innocent I, of the view of Augustine (see last chapter), and describes the contents of the current Vulgate. In it the apocryphal books,

The Wisdom of Solomon,

⁹ Reuss says that "this is properly the first official utterance of the Roman See upon this matter" (l. c. II, 340).

The Wisdom of Sirach

Tobit,

Judith,

First and Second Maccabees,

The Additions to Jeremiah, Daniel, Esther

are scattered among and classed with the books of the Hebrew Canon, without distinction; and thus the Romish Bible was defined, in terms of tradition going back to earliest days and sanctioned primarily by Augustine, as the Bible of ancient and common use in the Latin Churches.

(5) The political supremacy of the Church reached its highest point in the thirteenth century, but by the close of that century it received a deadly

**Political
Power**

blow in the victory of Philip IV of France in his controversy with Pope Boniface VIII.

In that struggle the king not only successfully withstood the pope but reduced the Church to submission to the crown. This did not change the Church's theory of supremacy; but it made a fatal breach in the fact, and was highly significant for subsequent developments in the spheres both of politics and of religion.

Thus the Church met the first stirrings of the Renaissance, and thus it stood at the close of the fifteenth century. We have seen how, in

**The Church
in 1500**

the second century, the Church came to some sort of terms with the world and began

to make a place for itself in the world. We have seen how, at the same period, a functional episcopacy passed over into an official one and noted that that change involved a revolution in both the structure and the

character of the Church. This official episcopacy has now culminated in the Papacy, with its tremendous claims to power,¹⁰ and the Church has come to be—not for every individual, indeed, but as a hierarchy—not only in the world but of it. It could not say—had no desire to say—with its lowly Lord, “My kingdom is not of this world”; nor was it disposed to walk the lonely path of humiliation and death for the redemption of mankind. On the contrary, the Church faced the New Age with a theory, and in a spirit, of autocracy as absolute, as implacable, and as corrupt, as ever marked a purely secular tyranny. And the autocracy of the Church was the more menacing and terrible because it embraced this world and the world to come, inflicting its penalties where it could and threatening worse to the spirit that happily slipped beyond its earthly grasp.

Religiously, too, the supremacy of the Church had been challenged in several quarters before the Reformation. But these challenges had been premature, and, in outward results, largely abortive; yet they made their impress and left their traces, seed in the soil of the common mind. And around the year 1500 a new fullness of the times had come that both promised, and at last provided, the proper condition for an effective challenge that should issue in a great change and introduce a new era in the religious history of the world.

¹⁰ “From having been, in the apostolic times, a pure democracy, the Church became a great federation governed by its bishops; it was an aristocratic system. Later the primacy of the Bishop of Rome made of it a monarchy, at first tempered by Councils, then more and more centralized, omnipotent, and finally absolute” (Sabatier, *Religions of Authority*, p. 13).

These favorable conditions were (1) spiritual, (2) intellectual, and (3) other—political, social, economic.

Conditions of Change We cannot tell what would have happened had any of these factors been lacking; it was their convergence that gave birth and form to the Reformation. Together they created a vast discontent that could no longer be suppressed or denied. It wrought changes in every line and has not yet spent its force or attained its goal.

(1) For the Reformation, the deepest root was profoundly spiritual, the moral hunger and moral indignation of struggling and aspiring souls. The question of the Canon was an incident, its resulting diverging definitions a by-product, of a much larger movement. And yet, as Sabatier says, "the Bible is the book above all books, light of the conscience, bread of the soul, leaven of all reforms. It is the lamp that hangs from the arched roof of the sanctuary, to give light to those who are seeking God. The destiny of holiness on earth is irrevocably linked with the destiny of the Bible."¹¹ The definition of its exact limits may be an academic question, ground of ecclesiastical divergence and dispute, but, less or larger, the Bible is the inspirer and satisfier of the soul, its guide from darkness to light, from passion to purity, hate to love, restlessness to peace, from a far and alien country to its home in God.

(a) The medieval Church had done all it could to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people, especially in those primitive vernacular versions that the people might understand. But its efforts had been brought to

¹¹ L. c., p. xxix.

naught. Between 1300 and 1500 vernacular versions had appeared in most of the languages of Europe.

Versions These versions, being of necessity based upon the Vulgate, naturally contained the apocryphal books, which fact illuminates what has just been said about the scope of the Canon. They had at first to be copied and multiplied by hand, so that their increase was slow and their number and circulation limited. Nevertheless popular interest in and acquaintance with the Bible in the vernacular steadily increased.

(b) But the opening of the fifteenth century saw the invention of printing and its application to the Scriptures, and that meant a rapid increase in the number of copies of these vernacular versions. The fact that they still contained the Apocrypha would tend to confirm the Canon of common use; but, even so, the reading of the Scriptures would stimulate spiritual apprehension and promote discontent with the Church in other aspects of its teaching and behavior.

(c) The corruption and oppression of the Church—sensuality and luxury, vanity and greed, tithes and indulgences—came very close to the common man. It did not even require the Scriptures to make him discontent; but with them in his hands he could see more clearly and could distinguish the ecclesiastical hierarchy from the Scriptural Church, and feel that he was not surrendering Christianity if he opposed or surrendered the Church that misrepresented it.

(d) The conception of Christianity as an inner, individual experience, salvation by faith rather than through sacraments in the hands of the Church to give or to withhold, a direct redemptive contact between man and God, had been so long obscured that it seemed now a very gracious novelty; and many seekers after God, like Luther, and Augustine before him, and Wesley after, found "their hearts strangely warmed" by this inextinguishable flame. It both satisfied the heart and was in line with the independent and individualistic thinking of the age.

(2) The deep ferment of the Revival of Learning was changing *the minds of men*, as it was changing the world in which they lived. The Reformers might repudiate some of the achievements of the scientific spirit,¹² but they were themselves, in part, influenced by it, and were its beneficiaries.

¹² Compare Luther's remarks on the new astronomy: "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is of course the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but the Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth." Similarly, Melancthon: "The eyes are witnesses that the heavens revolve in the space of twenty-four hours. But certain men, either from the love of novelty, or to make a display of ingenuity, have concluded that the earth moves. . . . Now it is a want of honesty and decency to assert such things publicly, and the example is pernicious. It is the part of a good mind to accept the truth as revealed by God, and to acquiesce in it." (Quoted from White.)

(a) A new scholarship was arising and spreading that could not be shackled by the bald authority of tradition or intimidated by the vociferous assertions of ignorance in any field. The Reformers did not assimilate or approve this new attitude, in any large and effective sense; they were still dominated by the mediæval idea of tradition and authority. But the choice of one tradition and authority in preference to another, and that the dominant, and the assertion of the right of private judgment, though limited, involved a declaration of independence in the fields both of intellect and of conscience that would have been either inconceivable or barren of results in a darker age.

(b) With the fall of Constantinople (1453) Greek flowed back into the West and brought with it "something of that generous freedom which it seems to confer as its constant gift," and not long thereafter Hebrew studies again began to command the attention of Christian scholars. These studies led men behind the Latin Bible that had so long held the field to its sources in the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament. And thus the situation that Jerome had faced reappeared in a wider area and under very different conditions; for in Jerome's time the authority of the Church was on the increase, liberty and learning on the decline, but in 1500 that situation was reversed.

These studies issued in the publication of Greek New Testaments and Hebrew Old Testaments, and translations from these originals. Again, therefore, as in the fourth century, the Church had before it different

Bibles. Approximately: The Vulgate, once denounced but now revered, occupied the place of the Old Latin which it had supplanted; the new translations occupied the place of the original Vulgate; and behind them both stood the Greek and the Hebrew. As these Bibles were

**Different
Bibles**

plainly different, especially in the contents of the Old Testament, which should be taken as the Bible of the Church? The final answer to that question marks the difference between the Romish and the Protestant Bibles.

(3) In many other particulars the mind and movement of the New Age was out of harmony with the theory and practice of the Church.

**Political and
Other**

(a) Innocent I had maintained that the division of the Roman Empire could not impair the universal supremacy of the Roman Church, to which was due a higher loyalty that transcended the bounds of earthly kingdoms (see above). But the new nationalism of the Middle Ages ran more and more counter to this thesis. The secular rulers were the heads of their own states, not merely as a matter of political theory but in accordance with a growing national self-consciousness that at once unified and differentiated the several groups. A civil ruler could and would assert himself against the Church, and his people would follow him; or they might assert themselves against the Church, and he would give them countenance and protection. The theory of the higher loyalty broke down in the face of the new political conditions, and this was a fact of great significance for the progress and ultimate success of the Reformation.

(b) Changes in the social and economic structure, due to the weakening of class distinctions, the expansion of commerce, the growth of cities, and the development of a wealthy and influential middle class—the breaking up of ancient attitudes and habits in many lines—could only leave the Church unchanged where people thought nothing of it and expected nothing from it. If it represented a value that they would not lose, it must be integrated with the changing order. The pull of universal change and the push of discontent were in the same direction, as they had the same source.

(c) Finally, a growing sense of the worth and rights of the common man, an individual self-consciousness parallel to the national, promoted independence and corresponding discontent with all forms of social oppression, ecclesiastical as well as secular. This new spirit was not irreligious, but it was generally anti-clerical. The privileges of the priests and the presumptions of the Church were not congenial to the new democracy; “what in modern times they call ‘liberties’” was not congenial to the theory and spirit of the Church: there was need for a middle term. The Reformation supplied that term in the only form that, so far as we can now see, was then conceivable or possible.

And this, broadly, was the place of the Reformation in all the restlessness and change that we have described. It was *a middle term* between an old that was dying and a new that was struggling to its birth. It conserved the great religious values of the past—and with them some things of less value; its treasures, too, were

The Reforma-
tion a
Middle
Term

in earthen vessels. It made contacts with a changing present, not complete even in sympathy and understanding; it saw men as trees walking, but at least it saw them, and saw them walking. And it is just this fact that it was neither a complete break with the past nor a complete fusion with the present that made the Reformation possible and gave it its distinctive character and meaning. But the end is not yet.

CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION—ROMAN AND PROTESTANT BIBLES

WE have seen that Romanist and Reformer alike recognized the principle of authority, but they differed as to the location of that authority. The Romanist found it in the Church, the Reformer found it in the Scriptures. This involved a direct denial of the supremacy of the Church, and an appeal from it to what was alleged to be a higher authority. Even this might conceivably have been conceded by the Church if the Reformers had only recognized its authority to define and interpret the Scriptures; for that would have reduced the supremacy of the Scriptures to a theory and left the actual supremacy of the Church unimpaired. But when this authority also was denied by the Reformers,¹ the whole question of the Scriptures—contents, nature, and use—was thrust upon the Church and had to be decided.

The Protestant Principle

We are here concerned only with the question of the

¹The view of the Reformers was that the right to define the Scriptures belonged only to "the most ancient church." "It is manifest that the present church does not have it," although "Popes usurp that authority." The Reformers wanted to put the Scriptures in the hands of the common man and asserted the right of private judgment in the use of them. Encyclicals of four popes in the last century condemned this circulation, and the authority to interpret belongs to the Church alone.

proper contents of the Scriptures, for the moment only with the Old Testament, and in that, since both groups ultimately included all the books of the Hebrew Canon, only with the status of the Apocryphal books. Questions of nature and use are necessarily involved in the question of contents; but they must be passed over with a word.

1. All parties agreed that their Bibles were "inspired"; but (a) since the Romanists defined a larger Bible than the Reformers and asserted a like inspiration of the whole, there was a difference either as to the area or the degree of inspiration (below); (b) more important still, the Reformers' theory of the inspiration and consequent authority of the "canonical Scriptures" placed them in

Inspiration a supreme *and exclusive* place and thus denied the parallel authority of the traditions of the elders which the Romanists maintained; and (c) the Reformers laid down no authoritative definition of "inspiration," but the Romanists spoke of the very traditions that the Reformers rejected as "dictated by the Holy Spirit," which was designed to assert for them a parallel place and authority with the Scriptures.

2. The Reformers adopted no authorized and exclusive text of the Bible, whether Hebrew, Greek, or vernacular version. They left that important matter open. But the Romish Church committed itself exclusively to the Latin Vulgate, and vernacular versions must all conform to that text. Several such versions,

Use English, French, German, and other, appeared with more or less (generally less) of

the Church's approval in the sixteenth century; but their use was not encouraged,² and their circulation was not extensive.

The Reformers asserted not only the right to have and read the Bible, but the right of individual judgment concerning its meaning. This the Romish Church categorically denied.

The Council of Trent (1546) met these parts of the heresy of the Reformers in these words:

“Moreover, the same sacred Council (previously described as “The sacred ecumenical and general Council of Trent, legitimately assembled in the Holy Spirit”), considering that it will

Council of Trent be no small advantage to the Church of God, if it indicate which of all the Latin editions of the Sacred Scriptures that are in circulation is to be held authentic (authorized), has decreed and declares that *this very (ipsa) ancient and vulgate edition, which has been approved in the Church by the long use of so many ages, is to be held authentic (authorized) in public readings, debates, preachings, and expositions, and that no one is to venture or presume to reject it on any pretext whatsoever.* Moreover, in order to restrain unruly spirits (*petulantia ingenia*), it decrees that *no one*, depending upon his own wisdom, in matters of faith and morals pertaining to the support of Christian doctrine perverting the Sacred Scripture to his own senses (meanings), *shall venture to interpret that Sacred Scrip-*

² In the *index* of 1564 all use of Protestant versions, and the use of Romish versions in the vernacular tongues, except in certain specified conditions, is strictly forbidden.

ture contrary to the sense which Holy Mother Church, whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, has held and holds, or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the fathers, even if interpretations of this sort were never to see the light. Those who run counter (to this decree) shall be reported by the Bishops and punished with the penalties provided by the law."

3. The question of the contents of the Scriptures, for the present, of the Old Testament only, may be divided into three stages.

(a) The first stage closes with the Council of Sienna in 1528, and belongs therefore to the earlier days of the Reformation.

**The Canon:
First Stage**

The return of Greek and Hebrew studies, as we have seen, brought to the fore again a condition similar to that which had confronted Jerome in the fourth century, with the important difference that the new art of printing spread the new knowledge rapidly and widely in a discontented and changing world.

The study of manuscripts and the comparison of printed texts brought out again the many divergences of text and minor content within the several books even in a single language line, while the comparison of the books in all their ancient languages, now greatly facilitated by their mode of printing, exhibited both these minor differences and the major differences between the Greek and the Latin and the Hebrew. Whoever would define his Bible, and the new situation demanded definition of all parties, must find his way

out of this confusion. There were only two ways out: The way of Scholarship, and the way of Tradition and Authority. And at the first, in certain high circles in the Church as well as among the Reformers, the movement was along the way of scholarship, though in neither group were the claims of scholarship adequately appreciated and recognized. Both were overshadowed, as we have seen, by the dominant idea of authority.

The first Polyglot was the work of a Roman Catholic Cardinal, Francisco Ximines, Archbishop of Toledo, with the assistance (among others) of two or three professors in the recently founded university of Alcala.³

It was the first complete edition of the Christian Bible in the original tongues and was dedicated to Pope Leo X, himself a famous and sympathetic patron of letters, by whom its publication was approved. In the Old Testament the text was printed in three parallel columns, the Latin between the Hebrew and the Greek.⁴ Such an arrangement made vivid and conspicuous the differences, especially in the matter of contents, between the original Hebrew and its primary and secondary derivatives, the Greek and the Latin. The Apocryphal books were scattered throughout the Old Testament, as in

³ Hence called "The Complutensian Polyglot," from Complutum the Latin name for the Spanish town of Alcala.

⁴ "Midway between them the Latin translation of the Blessed Jerome," says the Preface. "as between the Synagogue and the Eastern Church, as it were two robbers, one on either side, and in the midst Jesus, that is, the Roman or Latin Church."

the Vulgate, so that their absence from the Hebrew was visibly exhibited.

This is, indeed, the best mode of exhibiting such differences, but it carries with it no necessary conclusions. The differences may be due to the excess of one column or to the deficiency of the other. Ximenes met this uncertainty in his Preface and resolved it in accordance with the method of Jerome. He distinguishes the Apocryphal books from the properly canonical, regarding the Apocrypha as ecclesiastical books, useful for the edification of the Church but not authoritative for the determination of its doctrines.

No ecumenical Council had yet spoken on the issue. In the light of this early attitude in certain quarters in the Church it seemed at least possible that Churchmen and Reformers might here enter the same path and even reach the same goal. But another Council, that of Sienna in 1528, reexpressed the tradition of the Church in favor of the Bible of common use and again forecast the coming ecumenical decision of the Council of Trent. "In enumerating the books of canonical Scripture," it said, "*he who does not follow the prescribed usage of the Church, the decrees of the third Council of Carthage, of Innocent, and of Gelasius, and, finally, who rejects the catalogue of books defined by the holy fathers, is to be repressed as a schismatic and an inventor of all heresies.*" The dominant position of the Church is thus again made clear.

(b) The second stage closes with the decision of the Council of Trent in 1546 and marks the final and

authoritative definition of the Romish
Second Stage Bible in a form different from the Bible of
the Reformers.

By the beginning of this period the controversy had gone too far to admit of composition.

Luther had received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Wittenberg in 1512, taking upon that occasion the usual oath "to devote his whole life to study, and faithfully to expound and defend the Holy Scripture." In 1517 (October 31), he had published

Luther his famous ninety-five theses against the theory and practice of Indulgences, which had been met the following year by a Papal Bull confirming them. During the next two stormy years, the dispute advanced from the question of authority of the Church in the matter of Indulgences to the whole field of the authority that it claimed, and Luther laid down very radical propositions against its traditions and Councils and Fathers,⁵ and enunciated the principles of the supremacy of the Scriptures in the Church and the civil rulers in the state. These principles made inevitable a breach between those who accepted them and the Church; but at the same time they commanded the approval and enlisted the support of the civil authorities, which was a matter of the highest moment for the final success of the Reformation. In 1520 (July 15), Luther was excommunicated, and a few months later (December 10; the Bull had only reached

⁵ This was not a new contention. See the Lives of Wycliffe, Huss, John von Goch, John Wessel, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

him a few weeks before) he publicly burned the Papal Bull in Wittenberg.

The same year (1520), Andrew Bodenstein, of Carlstadt, then Luther's associate in the faculty of Wittenberg and his personal friend, but later alienated (d. at Basle, 1541), wrote his book, "On the Canonical Scriptures," which was not only the first complete exposition of the Protestant principle of the Scriptures in opposition to the Catholic doctrine of tradition, but at the same time the first and almost the only attempt to determine the canonicity of the sacred books individually.⁶ In his treatment of the Old Testament, Carlstadt put all of the Apocryphal books outside of the Canon. To some of them, however, he allows a certain subordinate sanctity and value (the two Wisdoms, Tobit, Judith, and the books of Maccabees), while the others are wholly excluded.

There were many differences of detail among the Reformers. In the Preface to his first edition of his German New Testament (1522), Luther laid down the startling proposition that all the Scriptures that men needed for their salvation were the Gospel and First Epistle of John, the Pauline Epistles, especially those to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and the First Epistle of Peter; but this is one of Luther's extreme subjective statements, does not adequately represent his own views, and was not accepted even in the Lutheran Churches. But even in regard to the Hebrew Old Testament, there was

⁶ Reuss, 1. c. II, p. 346. Carlstadt accepted the Pentateuch, but denied its Mosaic authorship.

universal agreement (among Romanists and Reformers) only in regard to the first and second divisions of the Hebrew Canon, the Law and the Prophets. Some old uncertainties concerning the proper contents of the third division, the Hagiographa, reappeared here and there, especially in regard to Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon; and the (later) national Churches did not all set forth specific definitions of the contents of the Canon.

But the general and prevailing position of the Reformers was to include in the Canon all the books of the Jewish list and to depress or exclude **Agreements** (below) all the Greek supplements thereto. We have seen that the earlier vernacular Bibles, being of necessity derived from the Vulgate, included the Apocryphal books that the Vulgate contained, intermingled, as in the Vulgate, with the rest of the books of the Old Testament. But this ceased to be the case after the rise of Hebrew studies and the printing of vernacular Bibles translated from the Hebrew Old Testament. The Reformers, in the period we are now considering, were not prepared to throw away all the Apocryphal books; but they were agreed to separate them from the Hebrew books and to give them a sub-canonical status. And so the old distinction between "canonical" and "ecclesiastical" books reappeared and was now visibly indicated by the separation of the Apocryphal books⁷ from the rest and the printing of

⁷There was some variation in the number of the Apocryphal books in the Greek manuscripts (see above): hence there are variations in the lists of the Reformers. The crux of the situa-

them together at the end of the Old Testament. Luther's German Old Testament (1534), Calvin's French (1535), Coverdale's English³ (1535, though not directly derived from the Hebrew), all followed this procedure; in fact, it was a general, if not universal, practice in the vernacular Bibles outside of the Romish Church.

There was no central authority competent to fix the opinion and usage of Protestantism as a whole; but, each by its own road, the several groups came to a position that is approximately represented by the Sixth Article of Religion of the Church of England, as it appeared in its English form in 1571. This, indeed, carries us beyond the period that we are considering chronologically, but it fairly represents the prevailing view of the Reformers on the Apocrypha, is the official and authoritative definition of the Canon for the Anglican Church, and is the point of departure for such changes as have been made by the offshoots of that Church, for example, "the people called Methodists."

**The Anglican
Articles**

The Article reads:

"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith or

tion was the Apocrypha of the Vulgate; but the Reformers applied the standard of the Hebrew to the whole group.

³The first edition printed Baruch after Jeremiah, though it is classed with the Apocrypha.

be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.⁹ (Then follows the list of the books of the Jewish Canon, closing with "Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less," without naming them individually.)

"And the other books (as Hierome sayeth) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

"The Third Book of Esdras, the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Book of Tobias, the Book of Judith, the Rest of the Book of Esther, the Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, the Song of the Three Children, the Story of Susanna, of Bel and the Dragon (the three last constitute the Additions to Daniel), the Prayer of Manasses, the First Book of Maccabees, the Second Book of Maccabees."

Three of these books, 3 Esdras, which is the Greek Ezra ("1 Ezra" in the LXX and the early fathers); 4 Esdras, which is another Apocryphal Ezra; and the Prayer of Manasses, which is in some manuscripts in the Odes at the close of the Psalter, are not regarded as canonical either by Romanists or by Protestants, but

⁹This is a peculiar and distinctive phrase, on which Westcott says: "A comparison of the Article with the corresponding articles in the Belgian, French, Irish, and Westminster Confessions makes it almost certain that the freedom of opinion involved in the ambiguity was purposely conceded to the English clergy" (1. c., p. 290).

they are printed as an Apocryphal supplement or appendix at the close of the New Testament in the Vulgate—that is, at the end of the whole canonical Scripture as the Romish Church defines it. But the purpose of the Anglican Article was to draw a sharp line between the “canonical” books of the Jewish Canon, as the only authoritative source of doctrine, and the “ecclesiastical” books that the Churches of the Reformers would use, indeed, but only “for example of life and instruction of manners.”

This was the general position of the Reformers. And by this centralization of supreme and exclusive authority in the Jewish Canon they denied the supremacy of the Roman Church in general and particularly the authority of “the traditions of the elders” as a collateral and equally valid source of doctrine with the Scriptures. They did not repudiate the principle of authority nor clearly analyze it. Many legitimate and perplexing questions they left unanswered.¹⁰ They were concerned with the pressing and very practical question of breaking the claims of a corrupt and oppressive Church. The question of the limits of the Canon was only an incident

¹⁰ Compare Karlstadt’s question of Luther: “Why, if you allow the Jews to stamp books with authority by receiving them, do you refuse to grant as much power to the Churches of Christ, since the Church is not less than the Synagogue?” Because such fundamental questions were not answered, really Romish ideas of authority, and even of the traditions of the elders, soon appeared in the behavior of the Reformers and the national Churches that are derived from them.

in this larger question. Since the Reformers had no

Why? idea of repudiating tradition and authority altogether—they would not have been the

Reformers if they had—they must substitute another authority for that which they denied. And the limitation of the new authority to exactly the books of the Jewish Canon was probably the only possible, as it was certainly the most simple and natural, solution of their problem. It was that part of the Old Testament about which there was practically no dispute: it was “the original Bible” (or so regarded); it had come down as a Canon from the days of Jesus and the apostles (or so they believed), and so was prior to and not dependent upon the sanction of the Roman Church; and it had a line of tradition of its own, in which no serious challenge anywhere appeared of any parts of its contents. (On all this see preceding chapters.) The fathers, even when they differed with regard to the Apocrypha, were, with practically no exceptions, agreed on these Hebrew books. Any closer and more detailed analysis would have greatly complicated the situation and weakened the position of the Reformers. If one authority were to be substituted for another, the single and the strongest element in the whole situation that might be substituted for the Church was the Jewish Canon. And thus it became the Old Testament of the several Protestant communions, the supreme authority for faith and practice. During the period now under consideration, it still contained the Apocryphal books; but they were excluded from the Canon proper, and their subordinate

Old Testa-
ment of the
Reformers

position was made clear both in statements concerning them¹¹ and in the mode of their printing. Already, then, as far as the Old Testament Canon is strictly concerned, it is reduced from the Canon of common use to the smaller limits of the Jewish Canon.

This reduction, which must have seemed to many pious souls—as it was—a mutilation of the Bible of their fathers, was met by the Romish Church in the same decision of the Council of Trent (1546) which has been, in part, already quoted. It condemned the position of the Reformers both as to the status of Scripture in comparison with the traditions of the elders and as to the contents of the Scriptures themselves, in these words:

“The sacred ecumenical and general Council of Trent, legitimately assembled in the Holy Spirit, keeping this always in view that the very purity of the gospel and the Church be preserved by the removal of errors, . . . and perceiving that this truth and discipline are contained both in written books and in traditions without writings, which (i. e., these unwritten traditions), received by the apostles from the lips of Christ himself, or from the apostles themselves, under the guidance of

¹¹The several Protestant Confessions, though formulated a little later, both reflect the position of the Reformers and set forth the standards of the several Churches. The Swiss: “To be read, but not to be adduced to establish the authority of the faith.” The French: “Though they are useful, yet,” etc. The Belgian: “Their validity and authority is by no means such that,” etc.

the Holy Spirit (S. S. dictante), delivered as by their own hands, have come all the way down to us, following the examples of the orthodox fathers, *receives and venerates with equal devotion and reverence all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament, since one God is the author of each, and also the traditions themselves pertaining both to faith and to morals as dictated (dictatas) either by Christ with his own lips or by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.*"

Thus far, as will be observed, the chief concern of the decree has been to define the status of Scripture in comparison with tradition. This is aimed at the contention of the Reformers that "Scripture only, without tradition, is the single and complete source of doctrine" (Westcott); and it asserts, against this contention, the full equality both in origin and in authority of the unwritten tradition with the written Scripture. One should compare with the high claims here made for tradition the position of the Jewish rabbis in the days of Jesus concerning their own traditions of the elders. They held that Moses had received the Law in writing and the traditions by word of mouth, and they were both then of the same divine origin and divine validity. The rejection of tradition is thus equated with the rejection of the Scripture.

The decree proceeds:

"It (the Council) has voted moreover that a list of

the sacred books should be attached to this decree, lest any doubt may arise as to what the books are that are received by this Council. They are therefore written below. Of the Old Testament:

Five books of Moses—

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

Kings, four

Chronicles, two

Ezra, 1 and 2, which is called Nehemiah

Tobit

Judith

Esther¹²

Job

Psalms, 150

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

Wisdom (of Solomon)

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)

Isaiah

Jeremiah, with *Baruch*

Ezekiel

Daniel¹²

Twelve minor prophets—

Hosea (and the rest as we have them)

Malachi

Maccabees, 1 and 2

(Then the books of the New Testament.)

If any one does not receive these books in their entirety, with all their parts,¹³ as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and are contained in the old Vulgate Latin version, as sacred and canonical, and knowingly and willfully despises the traditions above mentioned, let him be anathema.”

¹² Esther and Daniel include *The Greek Additions*, and Lamentations is included under Jeremiah.

¹³ This is designed to cover *The Additions*, last note.

This is the authoritative fixation and definition of the Romish Old Testament. It contains the Apocryphal books named, and they are as "sacred and canonical" as any of the rest. And thus the decisions of earlier (local) Councils and the utterances of earlier popes that defined the Bible in terms of the common use are now reaffirmed and strengthened, in terms adverse to the contentions of the Reformers, by this the first ecumenical Council to pronounce upon the subject.

Both Old Testaments thus go back to the Jewish synagogue. But the Romish goes back through the Septuagint, but not with the full contents of the Septuagint, to the synagogues of Alexandria and the Greek Dispersion, while the Protestant, passing back of this Greek derivative, goes back to the stricter synagogues of Palestine. The former adopts the Canon of old and common use; the latter adopts the definition of Jerome. The Romish Bible is now clear-cut and fixed and undergoes no further change; but the Protestant Bible has still another stage.

(c) That stage closes with the Westminster Confession of 1648 and has to do only with the Apocryphal books.

The Reformers had left these books in a somewhat anomalous position. They were in the Bible, but not in the Canon; might be read in the churches, but had no independent authority. Such a condition might easily issue in confusion, for all that was bound up in the Bible tended, from that mere mechanical fact, to become

Palestine vs
The Dispersion

The Apocrypha among
Later Protestants

integrated in the whole and thus to partake of a common character. At the same time, the emphasis put upon the Scripture in the controversy with the Romish Church, and the limitation of the Old Testament Canon to the Hebrew books, tended to emphasize the isolation of these books and to enhance the idea of their peculiar sacredness and exclusive inspiration. Consequently certain groups of Protestants came to be unwilling to give the Apocrypha any sort of ecclesiastical recognition or to print them in the Bible in any way.

This attitude found expression in the decision of the Westminster Assembly that these books "are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings," which expresses the position of the Presbyterian Churches. The Methodist Articles, though derived from the Anglican, simply omit that part of the Sixth Anglican Article quoted above that deals with the Apocryphal books, and thus these books disappear. On the other hand the Anglican Article still stands, and there is a tendency in the Anglo-Catholic movement to raise the value of these books to the Romish standard.¹⁴ While these books, therefore, are not regarded by any Protestant communion as canonical books, their exact status is not uniform, in the field of Protestantism, varying from presence and use as ecclesiastical books to entire rejection and exclusion.

¹⁴ The Apocrypha are included (at the end of the Old Testament) in the new Anglican Commentary on the whole Bible edited by Bishop Gore.

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

IF the purchaser with whom we started our studies should decide to buy a complete New Testament instead of a complete Bible, he would not now have to face such problems of choice as those that we have been considering. He would still have to make a choice in regard to numerous variants within the several books, but he would no longer have to decide whether any whole book or group of books should, or should not, be included in his New Testament. That decision has been made for him; and all modern New Testaments, whether Romish or Protestant—there are, of course, no Jewish New Testaments—contain the same twenty-seven books.

If he should not too hastily conclude that this has always been the case, and should decide that he must have a New Testament like the oldest in existence, he might procure photographic reproductions of the New Testament portion of the three great Greek manuscripts already mentioned, the Vatican and the Sinaitic, both of the fourth century, and the Alexandrine, of the fifth century. The Vatican (known as B) is the main source of the English and the American Revised Versions, but the Sinaitic (known as Aleph) also played an important part. The Sinaitic was unknown, and the Vatican was not available to Protestant scholars, when the King James' Version was made, or when the Greek New Testa-

ment was printed from which, through Tindale's New Testament of 1525, the King James' Version is ultimately derived. The Alexandrine (known as A) was also, itself, unknown; but it lay at the foundation, through the few and late derivative manuscripts which he employed, of the third edition of Erasmus' Greek Testament (of 1522) which Tindale translated, and consequently it is the source of the King James' Version. We are not concerned with the word and verse variations in these most ancient (complete) New Testaments; they are reflected, as we have seen, in our King James' and Revised Versions. Our present interest is only in the books that they contain.

When our purchaser looks at the contents of these ancient New Testaments, he will observe that they contain:

The Vatican	The Sinaitic	The Alexandrine	
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	
Mark	Mark	Mark	
Luke	Luke	Luke	
John	John	John	
Acts	Romans	Acts	Their
James	1 and 2 Corinthians	James	Contents
1 and 2 Peter	Galatians	1 and 2 Peter	
1, 2, and 3 John	Ephesians	1, 2, and 3 John	
Jude	Philippians	Jude	
	Colossians		
Romans	1 and 2 Thessalo- nians	Romans	
1 and 2 Corinthians	Hebrews	1 and 2 Corinthians	
Galatians	1 and 2 Timothy	Galatians	
Ephesians	Titus	Ephesians	
Philippians	Philemon	Philippians	
Colossians		Colossians	

1 and 2 Thessalo- nians	Acts	1 and 2 Thessalo- nians
Hebrews, to 9: 14 (The rest of the manuscript being lost, we cannot say what more it may have con- tained)	James 1 and 2 Peter 1, 2, and 3 John Jude Revelation of John <i>Epistle of Barnabas</i> <i>Shepherd of Her- mas</i> (partially preserved)	Hebrews 1 and 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Revelation of John <i>Epistle of Clement I</i> <i>Epistle of Clement</i> <i>II</i> (partially pre- served) (And as the index shows, though the book is now lack- ing) <i>Psalms of Solomon</i>

The purchaser is now in difficulty. Aside from the question of the strange order of the books, which he may pass by, not realizing its importance, he now has to make a choice involving the number of books that his ancient New Testament shall contain. And his difficulty is not relieved if he decides to go farther back or wider afield: it is rather intensified. The contents, and the uniformity, of modern New Testaments is the result of some one's choices; and we must seek the reasons for those choices.

Our New Testament embodies a part of a considerably larger body of literature that early Christianity produced as a by-product of its own vitality.

The Questions It therefore represents a selection that might have been different from what it was. Thus we have to consider both the fact of the New Testament, and its limits. Why a New Testament?

Why just this New Testament and not some other? Who determined these matters, and on what principles and with what authority? These are the questions that the actual possession of a definite New Testament sets for our study.

But these questions did not belong to the earliest times. For Christianity did not begin as a writing movement and did not deliberately propose to incorporate itself in a new and fixed body of sacred literature. It inherited from the synagogue a collection of sacred books in what we now know as the Old Testament, and it proclaimed and defended itself as the fulfillment of these Divine Oracles. It is these only¹ that are designated and appealed to as Scripture in the New Testament, and it was a long time before Christians felt the need of any other Scriptures or described their own new writings by that term.

And yet, from the first, Christianity consciously contained its own authority, conceived not as independent of, but as supported by and fulfilling the written memorials of the older revelation. This new authority centered in Jesus as the Messiah of promise and of hope. The first

¹ For the sake of brevity and emphasis, this ignores the vagueness of outline of the Old Testament, and the elasticity in the use of the word "Scripture," which have been already discussed. The point is that it is some other writings, for the most part those of our Old Testament, and not the writings of the new movement, that are described as "Scriptures" in the New Testament. The only exception is 2 Peter 3: 16, where Paul's letters are classed with "the other Scriptures" (see below).

impression that he had made was the impression of immediate authority: "He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Mark 1: 22). It

Jesus was not long before he was widely regarded as a prophet, and it belonged to a prophet to speak with divine authority. And for those who accepted him as the Messiah—that is, for Christians—he was vested with a still higher authority as the unique and supreme representative of God. His words were, therefore, from the first of the highest authority for his followers, because he was the Christ of God.²

Akin to the authority of Jesus, but of a lower order, was the authority of the Christian prophets who soon appeared among his followers and in his name

Christian Prophets declared the will and the plan of God. Their appearance was, historically and psychologically, congenial to the new movement, was, in fact, one of its most conspicuous and characteristic features. It was an expression of that outpouring of the Spirit of God that should characterize the last, the Messianic, times (Acts 2: 16, 17). Paul classifies prophecy among the "gifts of the Spirit" and gives it preëminence among them: "Desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy" (1 Cor. 14: 1; and compare chapters 12–14). Those who had this gift—and they were numerous, honored, and influential, in the early Church—spoke, like the prophets of old, with an immediate divine authority, and their words were

² Our designation as "Christians" instead of Jesuits (Jesusites) reflects this primitive Messianic emphasis.

recognized as the utterances of the Holy Spirit that possessed them and spoke through them.

Thus the early Church has three related authorities that possessed the characteristics of divine revelation, the Old Testament, the words of Jesus, and the utterances of the Spirit-filled prophets who spoke in his name. In all three the ultimate sanction was the same self-revealing God, who had spoken to the fathers in the prophets and now spoke not only in new prophets but, above all, in his Son (Heb. 1: 1).

But the recognition of these authorities, while it overshadowed, did not do away with authorities of another sort. For the primitive society, however Spirit-filled, was not without diversities, and diversities of gifts and opportunities laid down there, as always and necessarily, their lines of stratification. In particular, the first distinguishing proposition of the new faith, "Jesus is the Christ," demanded for its exposition and establishment a certain amount of *historical testimony*.³ By its identification of the Christ with the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, it entered the realm of objective historical fact, and something, more or less, had to be said about Jesus to give the statement content and justify the identification. Here, then, was an authority of knowledge different from the authority of insight or interpretation; for the facts concerning the

³The reader will observe how this unfolds in "the Jesus of history" and "the Christ of faith" according as the emphasis is put upon one term or the other of this primitive statement of the faith.

historical Jesus were not imparted by the Spirit, though the understanding of them might be. The facts themselves were acquired in the ordinary processes of human experience, and those who had these facts, and only those, could speak with authority, *a historical authority*, concerning them. These, naturally and primarily, were those who had been most closely associated with Jesus. And thus, over and above all others, and in addition to any other authority that they had, the apostles, whom Jesus had "chosen to be with him" and had commissioned to carry on his work, could speak with an historical authority concerning the facts of his life, especially concerning that supreme fact by which their faith in his Messiahship had been revived and confirmed, and which was central in all their preaching, his resurrection from the dead. It is a most significant fact that the early Church, filled as it was with the sense of immediate revelation and guidance of the Spirit, never wholly ignored this historical element nor the historical authority by which it was sustained. We should add, therefore, to the authorities already mentioned, the different authority of witnesses, among whom the apostles were preëminent, who could testify of their own knowledge to the facts, the words and deeds and experiences, in the life of the historical Jesus,⁴

⁴ Compare the conditions laid down in the choice of a successor of Judas: "Of the men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection" (Acts 1: 21-22).

as "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke 1, 2).

During the lifetime of Jesus and for some years after his death, the only one of these authorities that was in written form was the Old Testament. Jesus himself wrote nothing and gave no command to his followers

One Written Authority to write; and Paul mentions no gift of writing among the distinctive "gifts of the Spirit." The other authorities were recognized, not as independent of, but as supported by and fulfilling the promises of the Old Testament; but they existed only in oral form, and there was at first neither occasion nor motive for their embodiment in writing. The first followers of Jesus were not contemplating a distant future, nor a world-wide program of slow and irregular expansion of the faith: they were waiting for the early return of the Lord; and meanwhile they could deliver their message and carry on their work by personal contacts and word of mouth. Whatever authority they had was not conditioned upon its form of expression. A word of Jesus, or of the Spirit through a prophet, or of a witness, whether apostle or other, might gain fixity and permanence by writing, but it gained nothing in authority, and oral tradition survived and was highly valued long after writing began to be employed for the preservation, interpretation, and expansion of the faith.⁵

⁵ As late as about the middle of the second century Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, and doubtless others with him, still cared more for "the living and abiding voice" than for what he read in books.

But the exclusive supremacy of the spoken word was brief. Circumstances soon made writing not only desirable but imperative. A little time, and loving memory began to record some sort of reminiscences of Jesus; and a comparatively little expansion would soon create conditions of intercommunication that could best be met by letters. And so, not formally and officially, nor with any idea or design of creating a new body of sacred literature, but naturally and vitally, because of the love and faith that was in them, some believers soon began to write, and the forms of their writings—gospels, letters, apocalypses—were determined by their interests and their needs. Thus, spontaneously and unconscious of far results, Christians early began to create a literature that later, under the operation of different forces and to meet different needs, came to be gathered into a New Testament and to constitute a new body of Sacred Scripture.

Just how early this writing began we do not know. Certainly there was some Christian literature earlier than any of our surviving documents: it can be seen here and there in the study of the sources. But as the books that have actually entered into our New Testament, and all others that anywhere seriously approached such inclusion, lie roughly⁶ within the hundred years between 50 and 150 A.D., that century may be characterized as the creative period, and we need not take into considera-

⁶ Not deciding the question whether Galatians and the Thessalonian letters were written a little before or a little after 50 A.D.

James (?)

Colossians, Ephesians (?), Philemon

Philippians

1 Peter (?)

Mark ($\pm$ 70)

(Fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.)

B. Second Forty Years, 70–110

Matthew

Hebrews

Gospel according to the Hebrews (before 100)

Luke and Acts (c. 85–100)

Jude

Revelation

Epistle of Clement of Rome

John, 1 John

2 and 3 John

(Rise of Gnostic Literary Activity)

1 and 2 Timothy, Titus (90–115, in present form)

James (?)

C. Third Forty Years, 110–150

Teaching of the Twelve (Didaché)

Gospel of the Egyptians (before 130)

Epistles of Ignatius

Epistle of Polycarp

Gospel of the Twelve (?)

Protogospel of James (?, before 160)

Preaching of Peter (100–130)

Epistle of Barnabas

Traditions (Gospel?) of Matthias

tion any book written after 150 A.D. During that century Christians were creating the material for a New Testament; and by 150 A.D. the situation and development of the Church were such that no writing after that date stood any serious chance of inclusion in the New Testament Canon.⁷

But our Canon does not include all of that literature. It represents a selection, slow and hesitant in many particulars, from the following body of Christian writings produced before 150 A.D.⁸

Christian Writings Down to 150 A.D. Christian
Writings
to 150
A.D

A. First Forty Years, 30-70

(Earliest writings, especially Gospels, either wholly lost or absorbed in later documents.)

Galatians

1 and 2 Thessalonians

1 and 2 Corinthians

Romans

⁷ The inclusion among the letters of Paul, in numerous mediæval Bibles, of the spurious Epistle to the Laodiceans illustrates a certain looseness of the idea of the Canon as well as the uncritical credulity of those who received it; but that epistle never received ecclesiastical sanction as Scripture, and its erratic inclusion does not invalidate the statement of the text. This applies also to a few other early books (*e. g.*, The Acts of Paul) that enjoyed a certain local and temporary canonicity but were never received by the Church at large.

⁸ Adapted, with certain variations, from Moffatt's Introduction (xx ff.). There are numerous elements of uncertainty in this arrangement and dating, which cannot here be discussed; but the tabulation represents the situation with a good degree of accuracy.

Hermas, the Shepherd ($\pm$ 130)

(Early Christian Apologists)

2 Clement

Apocalypse of Peter

2 *Peter*

(The Canon of Marcion)

Gospel of Peter (?)

(Montanism)

At the first, all this was simply Christian literature, the by-product of various Christian interests, activities, and interpretations. It was what may be called the raw material out of which the Church ultimately created its New Testament, and nearly all of it, before that process was completed and the result fixed, was, in some quarter or other of the Church, regarded and cited as Sacred Scripture.

But while this literature was being produced, the Church itself was growing steadily, and in this creative period two developments of the utmost importance were quietly taking place:

Distinctions

1. The Church was becoming conscious of its own past, and was outlining itself not only with reference to the outside world, but with reference to its own historic and distinctive heritage; and

2. Certain natural preliminary crystallizations took place, in the second half of this period, in the field of Christian literature itself, that both drew lines of distinction and created definite literary blocks within that field. (See next chapter.)

Hence it will be observed that in the field within

which the Canon was created all the literature did not even then stand on just the same level, and that the Church that created the Canon was a self-conscious society, with a past and a heritage therefrom whose possession at once created and maintained that self-consciousness.

It will be noted: (1) That *all* the surviving literature of the first forty years is included in our New Testament; (2) that *nearly all* the surviving literature of the second forty years is included; (3) that *none* of the surviving literature of the third forty years, except 2 Peter, which was included late and after much hesitation, is now included in our New Testament. And this difference in the final result reflects a difference of feeling that appears very early. By the close of the first century (or even earlier) the past already begins to seem more glorious than the present. Inspiration has not altogether ceased: men might still speak in the name and spirit of the Lord and find some recognition for their utterances. But the old vivid sense of direct creative energy is diminished, and men are already looking back upon a noonday that is giving place to dusk. Time is already drawing its line between a creative past and an organizing future.

In that glorious past the apostles stood out in heroic proportions. They had occupied a distinguished position from the first, and the years added

The Apostles rapidly to their isolation and their prestige.

(See Matt. 10: 40; Luke 22: 29.) The vital controversy of the Gentile mission, the relation of Gentile converts to the Jewish Law, was referred from

Syrian Antioch to "the apostles and elders" in Jerusalem for settlement (Gal. 2: 1-10; Acts 15: 1-30).⁹ Paul himself was not of the twelve, but his constant assertion of his own apostleship and his coequality with the twelve was a claim to a position and an authority that was universally recognized. Though his claim was never acknowledged by the extreme party of Jewish Christians, who would have none of him or his works, it was naturally recognized among the Gentile Churches, that soon came to dominate the field, and in some quarters he came to be *the Apostle*, above all others. The Church itself was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2: 20); and in the vision of the heavenly Jerusalem "the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the lamb" (Rev. 21: 14).¹⁰

⁹ The difficult question of the relations of these passages does not affect the present point. For the passages certainly involve, both in Paul and in Luke, a recognition of the authority and leadership of the apostles. Indeed, the very existence of the Acts of the Apostles, as a continuation of the Acts of Jesus (the gospel), and of the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, a little later, is evidence of this attitude. And while the word "apostle" is used in both a specific sense, as a distinctive designation of the twelve, and a more general sense to describe the Christian missionary, one "sent forth" to preach the gospel, the specific sense overshadowed and before long crowded out the general. "Apostles" did not always mean exclusively "the twelve," but they were always *the* apostles par excellence, and the word tended to become their exclusive title.

¹⁰ Who were they? Did the writer mean to leave out Paul and include Matthias, or include Paul and omit Matthias?

God had "set in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12: 28). Throughout our period, the voice of the prophet might still be heard, declaring with direct authority the revelation that God had given him; but the atmosphere of the later days was already less congenial to prophecy than it had been in earlier times. But the living voice of the apostles had long been silent. In loving memory, Peter and Paul, and, more obscurely, Matthew and John, stood out in that blessed company. What they, and the rest, had said and done still survived in living tradition or cherished writing; but the apostles were dead, and the men of the second century did not equate themselves with them or speak with the same authority. Even before the close of the first century, Clement of Rome, in his letter, as representative of the Roman Church, to the Corinthians, while still feeling that he speaks with some degree of inspiration, exhorts his readers to take up and reread the letter of the blessed Apostle Paul and does not regard himself as the Apostle's equal, but says: "The apostles for our sakes were taught the gospel from (by) the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ was sent from God. Christ, then, from God, and the apostles from Christ; and both (stages) arose in due course according to God's will" (42).¹¹ And Ignatius "does not instruct his readers as did Peter and Paul: they were apostles, I am one condemned: they were free men, but I even until now am a slave" (Rom.4). He "fled to

¹¹ Compare: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." (Matt. 10: 40.)

the gospel as to the flesh of Jesus, and to the apostles as to the presbytery of the church" (Philad 5); and recalls, with a corresponding reverence, the mighty figures of Peter and Paul. And these two represent Rome and Syrian Antioch, the chief cities respectively of Western and of Eastern Christianity.

The line of teachers was, of course, continuous; and their watchword was "Remember."¹² Their function was not creative, but conservative. The field of their teaching was both historic and interpretative, the words and deeds of Jesus, and the meaning
Teachers of his person and his work (doctrine); and by the close of the first century the boundaries of this field were already roughly marked out. There was a "faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," and "the saints" were those who adhered to this ancestral faith, a body of "sound doctrine" ("wholesome teaching"); and it was the duty of good and approved teachers to teach "the things which befit the sound doctrine" (Jude 3; 1 Tim. 1: 10; Titus 2: 1). Even the Fourth Gospel encountered opposition in the Church (for other reasons, and) because of its Logos-

¹² Compare: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 20: 35); "I delivered unto you that which I also received" (1 Cor. 15: 3); "Ye became obedient to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered" (Rom. 6: 17); "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught" (2 Thess. 2: 15); "Confirmed unto us by them that heard" (Heb. 2: 3); "That thou mightest know the certainty of the things wherein thou wast instructed" (Acts 1: 4).

Christology,¹³ and whoever thereafter wished to introduce anything new, and win any general acceptance for his teaching, must trace his work into the past and support it by some sort of attachment, literary or traditionary, to the recognized authorities of former days. For the former days had already created certain venerated standards,¹⁴ and nothing that was recognized as contrary to them was likely to be received in that main line of Christian development that gave us the later Church and the New Testament.

But this feeling distinction and retrospective attitude must not be thought of as already laying down some formal, if preliminary, definition and outline of a New Testament. It represents rather a differentiation in the field of the Christian consciousness that forecast wide results in Canon, Creed, and Church, when the need for sharpness of definition should be felt to be imperative. It means that there was a Church, created and in a measure defined by the oral word and individual writings, before there was any Canon of the New Testament: that that Church had a continuous history and an increasing consciousness of its heritage, in which its primitive authorities, Jesus and the apostles, stood out more and more clearly, the Christian prophets, on the contrary, falling into the background; and that

¹³Its opponents were hence called Alogi ("against the logos") and were stronger and more widespread than is sometimes recognized.

¹⁴The old Roman Symbol, the basal form of our "Apostles' Creed," dates from about 140 A.D., and embodies material already commonly received.

**The Church
Preceded
and Created
the Canon**

it was this Church that, when the need arose, created the Canon in accordance with its heritage, and not the Canon that created the Church. Consequently, it means that, if and when there should be a New Testament, its dominant figures would be Jesus Christ and his apostles; and hence its primary forms would be memoirs of Jesus (gospels) and (other?) apostolic memorials that were hallowed by the usage and the sanctions of earlier times. Its primitive authorities would be embodied, in some form, in its normative writings.

There was as yet no New Testament, though there were, as we shall see, certain preliminary collections of its materials, regarded with increasing reverence, and a real, if partial, New Testament, including both gospel and apostolic elements, does actually appear in the last decade of this creative period. Such collections were nucleations in the larger body of Christian literature that was still more or less widely distributed and used, and they mark a stage in the formation of the New Testament Canon. And a Canon is now near at hand; but it will still be a long time before it acquires that definiteness and finality with which we are familiar.

CHAPTER IX

EARLY COLLECTIONS OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

A. Gospels

THE underlying theme of the earliest preaching was the Messiahship of Jesus. It had as its background and basis the Messianic hopes, Scriptural and popular, of the Jews; and its task was to show that these hopes were fulfilled in Jesus.

**The Gospel
and the Old
Testament**

The authoritative statement of these hopes was found in the Old Testament, which was recognized by both Jews and Christians.¹ Consequently, the problem of the champion of the new faith was the exhibition of the conformity of the career of Jesus to the Messianic expectations set forth in the Old Testament Scriptures; and that problem involved (a) some statement of fact concerning Jesus, and (b) the relation of that fact to, its support by, some citation from the Old Testament to which the fact related was held to conform. The establishment of this relationship, the proof that Jesus did actually fulfill the anticipations of the Old Testament, was the proof that Jesus was the Messiah.

¹This, as we have seen, was the Greek Old Testament in the form of the Septuagint (LXX). But the Christian use of that version led to the Jewish repudiation of it early in the second century, and thereafter the Jews used Aquila's version and the Christians used the Septuagint.

At first there was only one document in the case: the narrative element was oral. The speaker stated what he knew, directly or derivatively, concerning Jesus, and cited the Old Testament passage that showed that this fact belonged in the career of the promised Messiah. "We are witnesses of all things which he did," says Peter. . . . "To him bear all the prophets witness" (Acts 30: 39-43); and Paul wrote: "I delivered unto you that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3). This oral tradition, as has been said, persisted well into the second century; but with the expansion of the message and the dying of those who had been "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" it became a rapidly diminishing factor and was at first supplemented and then supplanted by written records as the only sources of information concerning the historic Jesus for those who needed "to know the certainty of the things wherein they had been instructed" (Luke 1: 1-4).²

**Written
Gospels**

There were a good many of these gospels. Luke already says "many"; our list in the last chapter shows eleven before 150 A.D., and if we should extend that limit the number would be greatly increased. They were written by different men in different places, varied in both factual and doctrinal content, and had different areas of use and popularity. There was no fixed primitive pattern

²Compare: "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah), and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20: 31).

to which they must all conform. The one thing that they had in common was Jesus Christ, and men wrote about him according to their knowledge and their understanding of him. With the fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), Christianity lost its historic center. But even before that time, the Church had become predominantly Gentile and had created important centers of its own, such as Syrian Antioch, Cæsarea, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, in the Gentile world. These Churches were bound together by spiritual bonds, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4: 4-7), but they had no organic union or central control. Each was "a little island in the sea of heathenism," with its own environment and needs, its own control, and its own preferences and possessions. Our earliest gospel, Mark, was written at Rome; the latest in our Canon, "John," was written at Ephesus. The case for Matthew and Luke is not quite as clear, but the probabilities seem to be that Matthew is an Antiochene gospel and Luke a Cæsarean or Corinthian.

Such local gospels shared in the prestige of the Churches for which they were written and by which they were accepted and used. Their historic authority, that they were trustworthy records, in fact and doctrine, of the words and deeds of Jesus, thus received very weighty sanction; and such gospels

Four Gospels soon came to occupy a favored position relative to those that were less well known or more remote from the great centers of Christian activity and development. The frequent and friendly intercourse between the great Churches facilitated the

interchange of their treasures, and at the same time the organic independence of each Church tended to preserve its own treasure intact. The spread and prestige of the Roman gospel of Mark, for instance, is indicated by the fact that it was largely incorporated in the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke, while its own solidity and assured position is indicated by the fact that it did not, like other sources so incorporated, lose its identity and disappear as a separate document. In the same way, the solidity and prestige of the four is indicated by their separate survival, due to the individual preferences of their separate centers, and their early collection into a preëminent, though not at first wholly exclusive, group.

It would seem natural and desirable that these four accounts, in view of their many diversities, should be reduced to a unity, and be supplanted by that unity in the usage of the Church.

Not a Harmony

That happened, indeed, for a time in one section of the Church. About the close of the second century, Tatian made a Harmony of our four gospels (the Diatessaron) for the use of the Church in Edessa; and down to the middle of the fifth century this Harmony "seems to have been the only form in which the gospels were publicly read in the churches (or even commented on by theologians) among the Syriac-speaking Christians."³ Thereafter this Harmony, which was never generally used in the Church, was supplanted by the separate gospels, our four. In its composition the Diatessaron thus witnesses to the primacy of our

³Streeter, *Four Gospels*, p. 10.

four gospels by the end of the second century, since it was compiled from them alone, and in its limited use and ultimate disappearance it witnesses to the individual solidity of the four and the supremacy of the fourfold over the more natural single gospel. Our four gospels were too solid, and separately too highly esteemed, to be absorbed or supplanted by any other form.

Our four Gospels thus early attained a primacy in the gospel field, due not to their origin alone, but to the prestige of the local Churches that accepted them, in which prestige the accepted writings naturally shared. But there are several distinct stages to be noted in their progress toward this goal:

a. The stage of the individual gospel in the independent local Church. This stage, as regards the **Collections** Synoptics, Mark, Matthew, and Luke, was brief. The friendly intercourse of the great Churches in which they centered led to the early distribution and mutual acceptance of these Gospels, and soon issued in,

b. The stage of the synoptic collection, in which Mark, Matthew, and Luke were all received in the several great Churches in which they had separately originated, and in the territory that looked to these Churches for leadership. This stage seems to have been reached by the year 100 A.D., or a little after, and it is vividly reflected in the later usage of Justin Martyr (150 A.D.; below).

c. The stage of the addition of the fourth Gospel to

the Synoptics to constitute a fourfold group. This stage was not reached until the latter part of the second century, and the difficulties of its attainment are reflected in the Muratorian Canon (about 190 A.D.; below. And compare what has been said about the Alogi, p. 149). The earlier acceptance and solidity of the synoptic Gospels at first stood in the way of the addition to them of a Gospel so different as the Gospel of John.

The early years of the second century thus saw in some, at least, of the great Churches a collection of the synoptic Gospels of primary, though not yet of exclusive, authority in their field.

Not Yet
Scripture

We have some record of comparisons and discussions of these Gospels before this consolidation took place, but no record of any conciliar or formal action looking to that end.⁴ The books were revered in their several communities, but they were not yet Sacred Scripture. Their primary authority was still the words of Jesus⁵ which had always been authoritative for believers; their secondary, historic, apostolic authority was increasing; but living tradition, and the sense of the presence of the Spirit, were still too strong for fixed and final delimitation in specific written records. The leaders of the several Churches must have passed some sort of judgment on the new Gospels that reached

⁴ Ignoring Tertullian's rhetorical allusion to "all the councils of the churches" (*De Pudic*, 10).

⁵ It is interesting to observe that the earliest quotations from the Gospels as "Scripture" are quotations of sayings of Jesus.

them;⁶ but that judgment was passed in a much freer and more generous atmosphere than obtained two or three generations later. The collection of the synoptics thus represents the acceptance by the Churches concerned of the gospels of other localities in addition to their own. But that acceptance need not, indeed, ought not, to be read in the more formal terms of a later day. It represents a concurring judgment, but upon parts of a living and common heritage; and it is the result and the reflection of the usage and the fraternity of the Churches concerned, at once a product of and a contribution to their increasing unity and coördination. At the same time, the distinction and the historic authority of the Gospels composing this collection were greatly enhanced by their union and their joint acceptance by several leading Churches. For such Churches, and those who followed their lead, the gospel was no longer embodied in a single book: it was embodied in a collection of three books, united yet each maintaining its own identity. And this enlargement, as it increased the amount of approved material, correspondingly reduced both the area and the status of the still living oral or written gospel tradition that was not so approved. The acceptance of the synoptic collection was thus a selective process by way both of inclusion and of exclusion.

⁶ Mark, for instance, was the primary Roman Gospel. It was accepted by the Roman Church on its own known certification. But the leaders of the Roman Church must have said whether the other Gospels, when they presented themselves, should be received or rejected by that Church.

This collection was known, as an already existing collection, to Justin Martyr, "the most eminent Christian of his generation." He was a "It is Written" Christian teacher at Ephesus about 135 A.D., and he wrote two *Apologies* at Rome, and a *Dialogue*, probably also at Rome, by or a little before 150 A.D., and not long thereafter suffered martyrdom for his faith. In these books Justin speaks of "our Writings (Scriptures)," as well as of the "Writings (Scriptures) of the prophets." And by "our Writings" he means distinctively a collection of gospels, which he describes as "Memorabilia of the Apostles, called gospels,"⁷ which were "written by the apostles and their followers," "the most trustworthy persons." And, speaking of the Sunday meetings of believers, he says that, at such meetings, "the Memorabilia of the Apostles *or* the Writings of the Prophets are read aloud as long as time permits." And, finally, Justin quotes these Memorabilia with the regular word used to introduce quotations from Sacred Scripture, "It is written."⁸

Justin's statement just quoted is the earliest mention

⁷ This is the first orthodox use of the plural form, "the gospels." The earliest usage is uniformly the singular. The gospel ("good news") was one thing; and it could only be spoken of in the plural after it had assumed certain definite and different (written) forms. The plural form had already been used by the Gnostic Basilides, early in the century.

⁸ The same word is used in the Epistle of Barnabas in citing the statement, "Many are called, but few chosen" (Matt. 22: 14). Basilides had already quoted both gospels and Pauline epistles as Scripture.

of the public reading of the gospels in the churches; but he is describing an already existing practice, not one that he introduced. Such public reading probably dates from the first appearance of the several gospels, but it became more uniform and important with the gradual cessation of the primitive oral testimony which the gospels finally replaced. By Justin's time, such public reading had become a regular feature of the Sunday meetings of believers, and the books so read were used as an alternative⁹ to the writings of the prophets, which were recognized as inspired and authoritative Sacred Scriptures. In the first half of the second century, therefore, a collection of gospels had been formed in some of the leading Churches—Justin represents both Ephesus and Rome—and the public reading of this collection had taken its place in the Church, parallel to the reading of the prophetic writings, as Sacred Scripture. This is a gospel canon.

The fourth Gospel does not seem to have been included in this earliest collection. Of about one hundred and seventy quotations from, and reminiscences of, the

⁹ Harnack rightly stresses the "*or*" in Justin's words (Origin of the New Testament, p. 26). But with reference to the public reading of the gospels, he says: "Finally, both these gospels (Mark and Luke), in spite of the high claims they make for themselves, do not anywhere show that they were intended for public reading; while St. Matthew evidently was from the first so intended. I have no doubt that the other two Synoptic Gospels obtained the rank and dignity of works to be read in the Church because they were associated with St. Matthew" (p. 73). This statement seems to be quite erroneous.

gospels in Justin's writings, not more than three can, with any degree of assurance, be assigned to the fourth Gospel, and yet that Gospel was peculiarly congenial to Justin's philosophic religious thinking. If Justin knew and used that Gospel, he did not, for some reason, deal with it as he dealt with the other three. Probably the fourth Gospel was still the Gospel of the Ephesian area, not yet generally received in the Church, as the synoptics already were, and therefore not yet incorporated in the same group with them.¹⁰

If this is true, there would already be in Asia Minor, where Harnack maintains that "it is most probable that the compilation of our four Gospels took place," a fourfold gospel canon, in which there would still be a recognized line of cleavage because of the more general acceptance in the Church of the threefold synoptic collection.¹¹ Such a line of cleavage is still traceable in

¹⁰Gregory says: "I am inclined to think that about the close of the first century or in the first twenty years of the second century—that is indefinite enough—the four Gospels were brought to gether in some places. The last Gospel to be written, the fourth Gospel, must have been at once accepted, and that, if I am not mistaken, as the work of John from the Twelve, and have had great success." (Canon and Text of N. T., p. 58.) This opinion is not only without adequate support, but it is quite contrary to some very plain, if scanty, early evidence.

¹¹Justin's course, in this case, would be like that of "a modern apologetic writer trying to establish the preëxistence of Christ, but, in deference to critical objections, attempting to do so without reference to the fourth Gospel" (Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 441).

our oldest surviving Roman Canon (the Muratorian, about 190 A.D., below); but by that time the fourth Gospel has been incorporated with the synoptics, and thenceforth the gospel canon of the Church is a four-fold canon.

B. The Letters of Paul

Paul's letters constitute the earliest Christian literature that we have. During the last fifteen years of his life, Paul was, above all others that we know, the great missionary, preaching, indeed, to any who would hear him, but realizing more and more fully, with the growth of Jewish opposition, his distinctive calling as the apostle (*i. e.*, missionary) to the Gentiles. His letters were the by-product of this activity. Inevitably, many problems arose in connection with this work, problems greatly enhanced by Paul's peculiar relations to Judaism on the one hand and the Gentiles on the other. The apostle was too wise, and too affectionate, to wash his hands of the newly founded societies of believers as soon as they were formed and he moved on to another sphere of labor. Upon his heart rested permanently "the care of all the Churches" that he founded, a care increasing with his very success (2 Cor. 11: 28). And his Churches naturally turned to their founder for comfort and instruction in the problems and perplexities in which they soon found themselves. Out of this situation there arose quite naturally and simply frequent intercommunication, by messengers and by letters (1 Cor. 1: 11

A By-product
of the
Gentile
Mission

and 7: 1), between the apostle and his Churches. And besides this direct pastoral relationship, other circumstances called for letters to Churches which he had not founded but with which he had or expected to have some sort of contact (Romans, Colossians, Ephesians¹²), and also for brief personal notes to his friends (Philemon; and, in part, the Pastorals). The great missionary, largely because he was the great missionary, was thus also the great letter writer of the early Church.

The letters were sent to prominent individuals in the several societies, but (except in case of the personal notes) they were intended to be read aloud to the assembled congregations to which they were addressed.¹³ They were thus public, and not private, documents. But they were not Scripture. They were Paul, living though absent, speaking to his fellow Christians; and they gained nothing, except preservation, by the fact of writing. Their authority was Paul's authority, no more and no less; and they were esteemed in accordance with the recipients' attitude toward Paul himself. Nevertheless, their public character and consequent public reading in the church were of great significance not only for their preservation but for their final status as canonical Scripture.

But it would be quite premature to think of any regular habit or fixed rule for such reading within Paul's life-

¹² Assuming the genuineness of this circular, it was not directly addressed to Ephesus.

¹³ "I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren." (1 Thess. 5: 26.) And compare Colossians 4: 16.

time, or for a good many years after his death. Clement of Rome, as we have seen, exhorts the Corinthian Christians to take up and reread Paul's letter to them; and Polycarp reminds the Philippians of the apostle's letter ("letters"?) to them, "into which if ye look diligently ye can be built up." But these quotations, while they indicate the preservation and, therefore, esteem of the letters mentioned, indicate also that the reading of the letters was not yet a regular part of the Church services. In Paul's lifetime, then, and for some time after his death, the letters were not Scripture; they were the words of Paul; and the esteem of them, and their use, were due to regard for Paul and not to any sense of the sacredness of the documents as such nor to any purpose to form out of them a new canon of Sacred Scriptures. The Churches reread them when and as love and need prompted them so to do.

In one case, Paul himself provides for an interchange of letters that probably resulted in the possession of two of his letters by each of the Churches concerned.¹⁴ Much wider circulation is essentially involved in the cases of the epistles to the Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians. The epistle to the Galatians was addressed to a group of Churches, "the Churches of Galatia" (1:1); and 2 Corinthians was addressed "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia" (1:1). These reached their

Multiplication and Circulation

¹⁴ Colossians 4: 16.

destination either through copies sent to the separate Churches, a natural and recognized mode of circularization, or through the reading of the original to the several Churches in turn as the bearers reached them in their travels. Our "Ephesians" is even more distinctly a circular letter, almost a catholic epistle. It seems to have been carried from point to point in the area addressed by the bearer Tychicus, who was also authorized to give, by word of mouth, personal information concerning the apostle to the communities to which he read or delivered the accompanying letter (Eph. 6: 21, 22; and compare the situation in 1 Cor. 1: 11; 7:1). Aside from the probability that such general letters as these were circulated by copies from the very beginning, the Churches addressed would probably wish to make and preserve their own copies of the general letter in whose address they were included and in whose substance their situation was discussed. Thus there would arise, even in Paul's lifetime, with his approval and as a perfectly natural and simple procedure under the circumstances, a certain multiplication and diffusion of his letters.

And this process was forwarded and generalized by the natural desire of each of his Churches to hear what the beloved apostle had to say to another Church, and by the frequent and affectionate intercourse among the several societies. The multiplication and circulation of documents was not the simple process that it is with us, and literary interest and attainment in primitive Christian circles were not high or general; but the

concern of these early believers with Paul's letters was not literary or, at the first, even historical. It was personal and religious. There was nothing formal or mechanical about it. It was simple, vital, personal. Love for Paul and interest in his message were its motive forces. The letters were the repre-

Collection tentatives of their writer, and they were wanted for the same reasons that made him dear. Means of their multiplication and circulation, though slow and simple compared with ours, were sufficient; interest in, and desire for, them were natural in the Pauline Churches. It is, therefore, probable that even before Paul's death little irregular groups or embryonic collections of his letters were already to be found in some of his more enterprising and important Churches.

How soon these little groups, assuming their existence, were gathered into a larger and more formal collection, we do not know.¹⁵ Goodspeed supposes that the publication of Acts (about 90 A.D.) so clarified and emphasized the significance of Paul and his work, stimulating interest in him and enhancing his reputation, that it brought about a formal collection of his letters between the appearance of Acts and the appearance of Revelation some five years later, the Pauline collection being reflected in the like collection of letters

¹⁵ Souter suggests certain initial local groupings, according to the provinces in which the churches addressed were located, *e. g.*, an Asian group, including Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and a Macedonian, combining the two Thessalonians and Philippians; but he does not attempt to date the groups (Text and Canon of the New Testament, pp. 163, 164).

that introduces the book of Revelation.¹⁶ Certainly there was such a collection early in the second century;¹⁷ but the existence of the collection must not be confused with its canonization. It marked, indeed, a stage in the formation of a new canon; but the collection did not originally arise in the idea of a canon and was not originally formed with any purpose of creating a New Testament.

Several stages are to be marked in the further development and definition of this collection:

a. Our Second Epistle of Peter, perhaps of Egyptian origin, and of a date shortly before 150 A.D., speaks of the Pauline letters as a group and classifies them with "the other (*i. e.*, the Old Testament) Scriptures" (3: 16); but it does not name the letters that compose the group.

A Pauline
Canon of
Ten Letters

About the same time, the Gnostic Christian, Marcion,

¹⁶ New Solutions of New Testament Problems, *passim*. Compare Moffatt: "Whether this *corpus Paulinum* can be dated as early as the age of Ignatius (about 115 A.D.), or even earlier (as Zahn argues), is a question which can only be asked, in the paucity of the available evidence. It is hardly likely that the idea of such a collection occurred to Paul or to anyone during his lifetime (he had not the literary self-consciousness of Cicero), but if the Church at Philippi was anxious to possess any extant letters of Ignatius (Polycarp, Phil. 13), it is reasonable to infer that a similar desire must have already prompted local collections of Paul's letters, long before there was any thought of ranking them with the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3: 16). (Introduction, p. 60.)

¹⁷ Recognized in both orthodox and Gnostic circles. Basilides (about 125 A.D.) quotes Paul's letters as Scripture.

who was teaching in Rome in 140 A.D., there compiled for his followers a true, if most peculiar, New Testament, which contained an expurgated Gospel of Luke and ten letters of Paul (also expurgated), and, later, a work of his own.¹⁸ The letters of his collection are named. They were our Pauline letters, lacking the Pastorals and Hebrews, and showing no letter "To the Ephesians" but one "To the Laodiceans," which was probably the name by which Marcion knew our Ephesian letter.

Here, then, is not only a collection of Paul's letters, but a true Pauline canon (and even a true New Testament, see below), recognized both in the orthodox Second Epistle of Peter and in the Gnostic circle of Marcion and his followers. Whether the two groups were identical, except for Marcion's deliberate excisions, we do not know; but it is probable that in both cases the letters were the same that had been a definite collection from the beginning of the century.

b. Marcion did not include the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews in his canon. In the matter of Hebrews, he was at one with the orthodoxy of his time; and his rejection of the Pastorals may also reflect the attitude of the contemporary Roman Church. But, if there was such a distinction, it did not long survive; for before the end

Thirteen
Letters

¹⁸ "Thus Marcion for the first time emphatically presented, both to the Jewish and to the Christian world, the conception of a fixed and definite collection of Christian literature conceived of as having canonical authority over against and in distinction from the Old Testament" (Streeter, I. c., p. 6).

of the century the Pastorals are also included in the Pauline corpus, and in the New Testament Canon (so in Rome, in the Muratorian Canon of about 190 A.D., which, however, did not include the Epistle to the Hebrews).

There were thus early in the second century, perhaps even before the close of the first century, two great but distinct collections within the field of early Christian literature, the (synoptic) Gospels, and the (ten) Pauline letters. We do not know where or by whom the collections were made; but we may form at least a plausible idea of motives and the processes that produced them. The groups were not formed as a new canon of Sacred Scriptures, and, at first, were not regarded in that light. The gospel collection was the (enlarged) literary deposit of the words and deeds of Jesus, heir thus both to the intrinsic authority that had always belonged to his words and to the apostolic authority ("the apostles and those who followed them") that guaranteed both words and deeds. The Pauline collection was the literary remains of the great apostle to the Gentiles, his interpretation of the gospel, and it had the authority that had originally belonged to him, enhanced by the lapse of years, for those who accepted his interpretation. The two collections were not at first united; but they stood on different levels, as Jesus and Paul, and were subject to different treatment. All Christians had a gospel, though not always the same gospel; but not all Christians accepted the Pauline interpretation of the gospel. Jewish Christians rejected Paul entirely,

**Gospel and
Apostle**

the Gnostic Christians greatly magnified him: the main line of the Church's historical development lay between the two extremes.

Before the middle of the second century (by 140 A.D.) both these collections were widely, though irregularly, recognized as Scripture. And the two groups, for those who accepted both, naturally gravitated together. The first known case of their fusion into a composite New Testament, made up of Jesus and Paul, is the Canon of Marcion, which we have described. But it is probable that Marcion's Canon reflects, rather than initiates, the usage of the orthodox Church.¹⁹ In any case, the Church had already a sacred literature of its own, in two collections, synoptic Gospels and Pauline letters, both of which, while they might be enlarged, were already too deeply entrenched in the esteem and usage of the Churches either to be omitted or to be diminished in any future development of the Canon.

¹⁹ "It is a very significant fact that the first quotation of a book of the New Testament as Scripture, the first commentary on an apostolic writing, and the first known canon of the New Testament, come from heretical authors. It is impossible to suppose that in these respects they suggested the Catholic view of the whole Bible instead of following it" (Westcott, Canon of the New Testament, p. 318, n. 1).

CHAPTER X

THE NEW TESTAMENT FORMED

BEFORE the middle of the second century, then, all Christians had some sort of a New Testament, if we may use these words loosely to describe a sacred writing or writings supplementary to, or a substitute for, the Old Testament.

This common fact suggests the answer to the question already raised, Why a New Testament? A New Testament is the literary embodiment of the consciousness of difference, little or large, between Christianity and Judaism, combined with the Christian conviction that the New Revelation is not inferior to the Old. As different, Christianity needed its own embodiment; and, as not inferior to Judaism, its embodiment could not be less sacred and authoritative than the Jewish.¹

But the scope of that embodiment, and its relation to the Old Testament, were not yet determined. All Christians did not yet have the same New Testament. Some adhered to the Old Testament and supplemented it with one or more Christian writings; others com-

¹ "The richer in thought a religion is, the more it lays claim to a perfect grasp of the truth, the more indispensable it is, as soon as the substance of this truth is fixed and systematized in detail, to possess what is peculiar to it in unequivocal, norm-giving records; a Christianity permanently satisfied with the sacred books of Judaism would have been a monstrosity in the history of religion" (Juelicher, Introduction, pp. 509-510).

pletely rejected the Old Testament and supplanted it by some form or other of a Christian collection. Nowhere was there a Bible, or even a New Testament, just like our own.

We have traced the differentiation and definition of the Old Testament in its Jewish, Romish, and Protestant forms. We now need to go back and trace the processes by which our New Testament emerged from this confusion of the second century.

Why Our New Testament?

The differentiation of Christianity from Judaism had first both opened the door and created the necessity for the self-definition of the new faith. Given that distinction alone, and Christianity would certainly create its own standards, and they would include a Sacred Book; but it is far from certain that they would include the Old Testament. As long, however, as the body of believers felt itself to be generally homogeneous, though distinct from Judaism, it needed only to define itself

Differentiation and Definition

relative to its Jewish antecedents and pagan environment. But when it became conscious of deep differences within itself, additional definitions were required to mark off the several groups of professed believers and to provide them with their respective centers of coherence and organization. Our New Testament is a part of the response of the central group of believers that survived these stressful times, and became the Church as we know it, to these several necessities for the definition and identification of itself. It is an aspect of the distinctive organization of this surviving group.

a. As long as the new faith regarded itself as an integral part of Judaism, "saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come" (Acts 26:22), it could very well move within the circle of that Old Testament authority by which it supported its claims, adapting that authority to its needs by the elastic interpretations of the times. Differentiation from current Judaism began, indeed, with Jesus himself; but for him and his immediate followers it was a differentiation within Judaism and not apart from it, and the new could still find a place within the old. Neither the distinctive features of the new faith nor the growing hostility of official and orthodox Judaism was sufficient to drive born Jews out of the fold of their fathers. Even Paul continued to maintain that he was a Jew, though every one except himself saw that the gospel that he preached to the Gentiles was not Judaism. But the body of Jewish Christians could not receive Paul's gospel, because it involved a profound impairment of Judaism as they had received and understood it. They steadfastly adhered to the Old Testament, marking their distinction within Judaism by the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah and the consequent recognition of the supremacy of his words. These words, for them, took written form in the early "Gospel of the Hebrews," and that was all of the Christian literature that they ever received as Sacred Scripture.

b. Gentile Christians faced a very different situation. They had no Jewish national inheritance or consciousness, and they had received and accepted the gospel in

its un-Jewish—one might fairly say, its anti-Jewish—Pauline interpretation. Many of them probably shared the common antipathy of the times to the Jews and all things distinctively Jewish, and the attitude of Jewish Christians, even in high places, had been little calculated to remove this antipathy. If Jewish Christians would not have Paul, Gentile Christians certainly would not give him up; and if they came to feel that they must choose between the Old Testament and Paul, there was at least a probability that they would abandon the Old Testament in favor of their own apostle.

**Christianity
Outside of
Judaism**

1. The Gnosticism that so deeply and dangerously divided the Church of the second century issued, when its principles were applied to Judaism, in just this result. Marcion, “the most formidable of the Gnostics, precisely because he was the most Christian,” believing that Paul was the only one of the apostles who had properly apprehended and transmitted the gospel of Christ, made up a purely Pauline canon, as we have seen, for the use of his Churches, and his Churches survived for several hundred years. The various Gnostic groups differed, indeed, considerably among themselves; but they agreed in this, that they all rejected the Old Testament and all received Paul’s letters more or less completely.² Their Bibles, if we may speak loosely, varied from the

**Paul: No Old
Testament**

² Tertullian even calls Paul “the Apostle of the heretics,” not expressing his own attitude to the Apostle, but because of Paul’s high favor with the Gnostics. The Cerinthians, like the Ebionites, with their legalistic attitude, did not accept Paul.

compact Pauline collection of Marcion to the Church's New Testament, supplemented with additional writings of their own. But, whether more or less, they contained no Old Testament; and what they did contain was interpreted in accordance with the Gnostic tenets, set up as a correct representation of Christianity, and, generally, supported by the allegation of some secret tradition, derived from Jesus and one or other of the apostles, which the Gnostics alone possessed.

The Gnostic teaching of the chasm between spirit and matter, God and the world, necessarily led to the repudiation of the Old Testament. The good God, who was Spirit, could not be the Creator God, maker of heaven and earth, because such contact with evil matter was impossible for the pure Spirit. The Jehovah of the Old Testament was therefore a lower being: the good God was revealed in Jesus Christ, and in the light of that revelation the lower God and all that pertained to him were exposed in their true character and were to be rejected by the enlightened Christian. But in the understanding and interpretation of that revelation one might not say that "Jesus is the Christ," because the heavenly Christ could not be integrated with the evil matter of the flesh. Jesus Christ was only an appearance, a phantom; or, if the body of Jesus was real, it was only the loose and transient abode of the spirit Christ. The Word might seem to be flesh, it might loosely dwell in the flesh; but it could not become flesh and dwell among us. Any identification of the historic Jesus with the Christ of God, any real and substantial incarnation, involved a

contradiction in terms, was a philosophic impossibility, and must be rejected, in the interest of Christianity itself, in the light of the better knowledge.

Gnostic Christianity thus stood at quite the opposite extreme from the Jewish—the one exaggerated, the other repudiated, the Old Testament. Gentile Christians would not accept the Jewish Christian position, but they found the Gnostic, with its claims to deeper insight and better knowledge, extremely

Its Challenge alluring; and by the middle of the second century large numbers of believers—some have estimated the total at one-half the whole body—were attached to one or another of the Gnostic groups. Gnosticism was, in fact, a challenge to every Gentile believer; and those who would not accept it had very vivid need to justify their refusal by the exposition of better reasons for the faith that they maintained. Happily, such reasons had already been preparing, and the historic faith was ready to confront the speculative in a life and death struggle for the allegiance of the Gentile world.

2. Gnosticism, in a rudimentary form, had entered the Church at a very early date; some of its aspects appear in errors that Paul himself sought to correct, especially in Colossæ. But before it reached its advanced and threatening development in the second century, the historic faith, held by that

The Historic Faith central group of believers that we specifically designate as the Church, had become sufficiently organized and had defined itself and its primitive apostolic deposit with sufficient

solidity and clearness both to set a standard of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" and effectively to oppose all departures from, or attacks upon, that standard. (See also below, Chapter XI, beginning.)

In this process the great Apostolic Sees occupied a natural position of preëminence and leadership. The faith that they had received and cherished naturally and inevitably set the standard of Christianity in their spheres of influence and control. And as these spheres widened and were consolidated, that faith became at once more extensive and more imperious. Despite diversities among these Churches—and they did not all or altogether agree, because the faith had come to them in fluid form, with its own primitive diversities, and had developed in different environments—they nevertheless had a common core of historic apostolic tradition and ancient usage that was sufficient to define and distinguish them in the midst of the rising variety of opinions claiming to express the true Christian faith. And this tradition was not some secret teaching, later alleged and delivered to a chosen few, that recognized the prestige of the apostolic even in distorting it;³ it

³ Thus, "Basilidea appealed to the authority of Glaucias, who, as he proudly affirmed, was 'an interpreter of Peter'; and he also made use of certain 'Traditions of Matthias' which claimed to be grounded on 'private intercourse with the Saviour,' . . . and Valentinus professed to follow the teaching of Theodas, a disciple of St. Paul. The circumstance is important; for it shows that at the beginning of the second century, alike within and without the Church, the sanction of an apostle was considered to be a sufficient proof of Christian doctrine" (Westcott, *Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 300, 304).

was the open message that the Churches had received from the apostles, embodied in the writings of "the apostles and those who followed them," and it was the natural and inevitable standard for testing whatever claimed the sanction of antiquity and the apostolic name.⁴

The doctrinal and the literary elements in this tradition were closely intertwined. The great inheritance of ethical monotheism which the Church had received from the synagogue, the unfolding beneficent purpose of this one good God, an old covenant forecasting and now fulfilled in the new, a Messiah promised

**The Old Testa-
ment and
Paul**

and now come, "born of a woman," "of the seed of David according to the flesh," "the man Christ Jesus," all this bound the Old Testament and the apostolic message, oral and written, too closely together for them to be severed without an arbitrary violence. Paul's emphasis upon the newness of Christianity and upon the heavenly Christ, his divergence from the Old Testament and from the Palestinian tradition that adhered to it, created a profound and perplexing problem.⁵ One solution of the

⁴"For the determination of Apostolic Doctrine the Church appealed against the Gnostics to the open tradition of the Apostolic Sees; similarly for the determination of the genuineness of writings reputed Apostolic it appealed to the same tradition. The tradition of either Antioch, Ephesus, or Rome would be a sufficient guarantee of Apostolic authorship, but it is doubtful whether anything less than that would have sufficed" (Streeter).

⁵"Wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3: 16).

difficulty was to reject Paul, as the Jewish Christians did; another solution was to reject the Old Testament, as the Gnostics did: but the great apostolic Churches refused to accept either of these solutions. Their standard was the apostolic tradition, "that which had been delivered unto them"; and despite the difficulties in the way, they adhered both to the Old Testament and to Paul as parts of their apostolic inheritance.

3. There was still another factor that played an important part in the definition of the Church and the determination of its canon, and that was the decadence of prophecy. In the first days of the Church, as we have seen, prophecy was a common, coveted, and influential gift. But even in the rudimentary organization of a Pauline Church, predicated upon the brief delay of the Lord's return, there was introduced an element of *order* that laid its restrictions upon the exuberant expression of spiritual gifts, prophecy included. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets," they therefore can control their prophetic utterances in the interests of decency and order, "for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14: 29-33). In the very nature of the case, prophecy is not subject to organization, though its ethical deposit may be organized. Apocalypticism, which was such a conspicuous feature of primitive Christian prophecy, will fade with the lapse of years; and if, at the same time, organization progresses, prophecy will seem more and more irregular and will ultimately give place to the more orderly procedure,

The Deca-
dence of
Prophecy

the more calculable forces, and the regular rules of the organized society. Time and organization, in the Church as in Judaism before it, first depressed and then eliminated the acknowledged prophetic gift.

By the end of the first century there is an official, as distinguished from a functional, episcopacy in the Church;⁶ and the rapid development of the monarchical episcopacy, with its chief center and most imperial claim in Rome, soon made the great metropolitans the heads of powerful groups and the guardians of the tradition, and vested them with an authority hardly, if at all, less than that of the tradition itself. Such a growing officialdom has no place for the disturbing elements of prophecy, and prophecy cannot breathe in such an atmosphere. The Church could not be at once an official organization and a prophetic enthusiasm: as the one increased the other must decrease. It could not find its great day in the future and also in the past: memory and hope move in opposite directions. And so the Church itself underwent a profound modification in the very process of organizing and preserving its apostolic tradition. Prophecy continued to exist and to be recognized, but with diminishing power and prestige, until about the middle of the second century. But before the end of that century, not only apocalypticism, as a living and normal expression of the Christian hope, but prophecy itself, as a still functioning mode of divine revelation and guidance, were generally discredited in the Church, and such of its literary embodiments as

⁶ Ignatius lays down the principle that we "must regard the bishop as we regard Christ."

were accepted and preserved—our book of Revelation was finally, and hesitantly, the only one—were rather exotic memorials of an apostolic past than vital expressions of contemporary faith and hope.

The Montanist reaction, shortly after the middle of the second century, undertook to reverse this process and to rehabilitate prophecy in its primitive vitality and vividness as a present and sufficient guide for believers through the better to the impending best. Naturally it ran quite counter to the prevailing tendency to magnify the past and to find in the fixed apostolic tradition an objective and static authority for faith and manners; that was the ground of its protest. It drew a considerable following, including some men of ability and eminence in the Church; but since it was not able to reverse the settled tendency of the Church, its ultimate effect was just the opposite from that at which it had aimed. The Church's loyalty to its apostolic inheritance was intensified, the written memorials of that inheritance became more precious, more distinct, and more coherent, and the whole idea of contemporaneous prophecy, especially apocalyptic, was deeply and finally discredited.⁷

⁷ "It was in opposition to this position (the Montanist) that the leaders of the Church first thought out and developed the idea of a covenant established and finally sealed in the manifestation of Christ and in the work of his apostles, so that they were able consistently to reject *every* work which did not belong to this primitive epoch" (Harnack, *Origin of the New Testament*, p. 35).

"The dispute between the Church and Montanism resulted in

This reaction against Montanism definitely closed the creative period, as far as the New Testament was concerned (above, p. 141). More; by its emphasis upon the apostolic deposit, and its attribution to the apostles of a peculiar and plenary inspiration, it limited the area of the creative period to the activities of the apostles and its products to their works. It thus brought to a definition and a close tendencies which we have already seen at work in the Church. The original Spirit-filled, apocalyptic brotherhood gave place to an organized ecclesiastical society, and the Church whose brief memories had at first sustained its vivid hopes now found itself possessed of lengthening memories in which its earlier hopes were at once embedded and obscured. It had found itself in an existing world order, had, in a sense, come to terms with that order; and its remaining task, within, was to complete its definition and consolidation in terms of the memories of its Golden Apostolic Age.

In the performance of this task, the Roman Church maintained and enlarged its earlier leadership. It had had from the first a certain natural pre-eminence among the early Churches, and it was not slow to realize that fact. Its very location gave it a reflected share in the prestige and the attitude of the imperial city: all roads led to Rome, which was the capital, the center of

an imperative demand for the one true mark of the primitive—*i. e.*, Apostolic origin—and in a withdrawal of favor from books of an apocalyptic character" (Juelicher, *Introduction to New Testament*, p. 510).

authority of the world. No Church after the fall of Jerusalem had quite the claims that Rome had to be regarded as the central and chief Church of all who adhered to the primitive apostolic tradition. Antioch, Cæsarea, Corinth, Ephesus, each had been the scene of apostolic residence and activity, and each had its repute and influence as a center of Christianity, but in none of them did all the factors of leadership, apostolic and imperial tradition, converge as they converged in Rome.

The Roman Church, and, to a very large but varying degree, the other Churches also, early recognized and accepted this situation. Before the end of the first century, Clement of Rome, as the head and representative of the Church there, wrote a letter to the Corinthians exhorting them to unity and orderliness and to due respect for their constituted authorities; and a hundred years later a Roman bishop (Victor) claimed the authority, and exercised it, to excommunicate the Churches of the Province of Asia on the question of the date of Easter, on which their tradition and practice differed from that of Rome. Between Clement and Victor the natural prestige and leadership of the Church in Rome has passed over into a claim to supreme ecclesiastical authority.

As we have already seen, the collection of the (synoptic) Gospels, treated as Scripture, and the collection of the Pauline letters, similarly treated, first appear in Rome a little before the middle of the second century, the former in Justin Martyr, the latter in the

Gnostic Marcion. We do not know just what part the Church in Rome played in the formation of these collections, but we may be sure that her acceptance of them as Scripture was of primary importance for their place and preservation in the Church at large. For by the middle of the second century the influence of the Church in Rome was already overshadowing, and by the end of that century it was supreme and decisive. New Testaments were not yet all alike: in Rome itself the New Testament was not yet finally defined and closed. But a Roman standard was set up that presently drew its lines among the local variations; and no book of the New Testament that Rome finally excluded was ever finally included in the Canons of any of the great surviving Churches, and no book that Rome finally included—with the partial exception of Revelation—was ever finally excluded from such Canons.

It is, therefore, of peculiar interest that our earliest orthodox list of the books of the New Testament is a Roman list coming from the last decade of the second century. This is the famous **The Muratorian Canon** (or Fragment),⁸ the author of which seems to have been Hippolytus, “the most notable theologian of the Church of Rome during the period A.D. 190 to 235” (Streeter). The text of the fragment is very corrupt and difficult to restore, and the meaning is here and there uncertain; but it is clear enough for our present purpose.

The Muratorian Canon contains, or contained (since

⁸ Named from its discoverer, L. A. Muratori, who found it in the Ambrosian Library in Milan and published it in 1740.

the statement concerning Matthew, and all but the last clause of the statement concerning Mark, are lost):

(1) *Our Four Gospels*—with a brief note on Luke, and a comparatively lengthy note on the Fourth Gospel.

Four Gospels (a) Luke (says the author), the friend and companion of Paul, “compiled the third gospel in his own name from oral tradition; but he did not himself see the Lord in the flesh” (compare Luke 1: 1-4).

(b) The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, is the work of “John, one of the disciples,” written at the request of “his fellow disciples and bishops.” In accordance with a revelation granted to “Andrew, one of the Apostles,” it was decided “that John should describe everything in his own name, with the review and sanction of the whole company” (*cunctis recognoscen-*
John *tibus*; see John 21: 24). Hence, in spite of its differences from the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel is to be regarded as the amply authenticated writing of one who was “not only an eyewitness but a hearer and a writer of all the wonders of the Lord in order,” which is sustained by a quotation of 1 John 1: 1.

(2) *Acts*—which is described as “the acts of all the apostles,” and is a record of “the several things that were done in his (Luke’s) presence.” This conclusion
Acts is deduced from, and explains, the omission from Acts of the last scenes in the lives of Peter and of Paul.

(3) *Thirteen Pauline Letters*—divided into two groups:

(a) To Churches. “The Blessed Apostle Paul, fol-

lowing the order of his predecessor John," wrote to seven Churches: Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, Thessalonians, Romans. The errors and faults of the Corinthians and the Thessalonians called forth an additional letter to each of these Churches; but that does not affect the number seven (churches). And though the letters are addressed to individual Churches, that is a matter of name only. The letters are really designed (observe the number, seven) for the whole Church. "For John, also, in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven Churches, really speaks to all."

Paul to Churches (b) *To Individuals*. "Moreover, one letter to Philemon, and one to Titus, and two to Timothy (though written) for love and affection, are nevertheless hal-
To Individuals lowed in the esteem of the catholic Church for the ordering of ecclesiastical discipline."

(4) *General*. "The epistle of Jude, indeed, and two under the name of John, are received in the catholic Church, and the Wisdom written by the
General friends of Solomon in his (or, its, the Church's) honor."

(5) *Apocalypses*. "An Apocalypse, too, of John, and one of Peter likewise, we receive, which some of our people do not wish to be read in the Church." But the Shepherd of Hermas, since it was written
Apocalypses quite recently in Rome by Hermas, the brother of Bishop Pius, "ought to be read, indeed, but cannot be read aloud to the people in the church," since Hermas cannot be reckoned either among

the prophets (of the Old Testament) or among the Apostles.

This is our earliest orthodox Canon and dates from the end of the second century. It represents the usage and judgment of the Church in Rome; but, as the phrase "catholic Church" means the Church general or universal, the list sets a standard for all the communities that recognized the leadership of Rome. It is not a collection of new books that are canonized out of hand: it is rather a collection of much older books that have been long more or less widely used and revered in the Churches, that are now brought together, differentiated from all other books by the application of the Roman standard of antiquity, apostolicity, and church usage, and stamped with the seal of the approval of the Roman Church.

**A Canon of the
Old Books**

It is a true New Testament, of the same form as our own, and it marks a great advance in the definition and consolidation of the Church. It is the product of the internal processes of organization and the external pressures which have been mentioned. But it is not yet either final or universal. It was still subject to change, even in Rome, and it did not immediately determine the usage of the other Churches. It contains some things that our New Testament lacks and lacks some things that ours contains; and it will be, indeed, nearly two hundred years more before we find a New Testament exactly like our own.

**A True New
Testament**

CHAPTER XI

THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPLETED—IN TYPE

THERE is no doubt that the Church, as a surviving Apostolic Society, would, sooner or later, have created its New Testament out of the written memorials of its primitive authorities—Jesus, the Christian prophets, Apostles, and teachers—as a result of its inheritance and its own inner need of definition and organization. Aside from the analogy of other religious movements, Christianity had inherited and used from the first a sacred literature in the Old Testament. But that was regarded as the literature of the Old Covenant, and Christianity was the New Covenant (2

Cor. 3: 6, 14; Luke 22: 20; Heb. 9: 15). **Inner Need**

The literature of the Old Covenant was regularly read in the public meetings of believers, and side by side with it, and with increasing regularity, the literature of the New Covenant was also read. This parallelism tended to complete itself in the form, Old Covenant in the Old Testament, New Covenant in the New Testament; for the writings of the New Covenant could not permanently remain unorganized or be regarded as inferior to the writings of the Old Covenant.

But, as a matter of fact, the process of selecting and canonizing the literature of the New Covenant took place in the midst of tremendous stress, and that stress both hastened the process and clarified and fixed its principles. The

**Outside
Pressure**

Church's New Testament, as an Apostolic deposit of the literature preserved, cherished, and (more or less) publicly read in the great Sees, was a part of its defense against the Gnostics; as a closed Apostolic deposit, it was a part of the Church's answer to the Montanists; and, in both respects, as Apostolic and as closed, it was the definition and limitation of the sacred and authoritative doctrinal literature of the Church in the midst of, and against, the mass of contemporary apocryphal literature, whether orthodox or heretical. Both inner needs and outside pressure played their parts in the formation of the New Testament Canon,¹ and both were realized and met most clearly and comprehensively by the Roman Church.

The Muratorian Canon is the product of that Church. It represents *a new type* of New Testament, not only more comprehensive but more skillfully constructed than its predecessors, the type with which we are ourselves familiar, containing Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles, and Revelations.

A New Type of
New Testament

¹ "To the Gnostics in general the answer of the Church was to appeal to the unbroken tradition of the great sees founded by the apostles, and to the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles recognized by those Churches; against Marcion in particular the tradition of the Church of Rome gained special importance from its claim to represent the united tradition of both Peter and Paul whom Marcion's theory set at variance with one another" (Streeter, l. c., p. 6).

"It was the Montanist, not the Gnostic crisis, that brought the idea of the New Testament to final realization and created the conception of a closed canon" (Harnack, l. c., p. 38; and for the place of external pressure in the process, compare pp. 31, 32 n).

The writer says "we receive" certain books; but "we receive nothing at all" of other books. He is speaking in the name of the Church in Rome and is voicing its usage and judgment. There is **The Judges** no account of conciliar action, though there must have been some sort of congregational, or, rather, episcopal, decision behind these statements. They express the discriminating judgment of the leaders of the Roman community, and they were authoritative for that Church and for those who recognized its leadership. The further statement, that certain books "are canonized in the Catholic Church," is rather an expression of the claim of the Roman Church to catholicity (universality) than a simple statement of existing fact.

The early Church had recognized a "gift" of "the discerning of spirits" (1 Cor. 12: 10). Even in a Spirit-filled age, when prophets abounded and were much esteemed, and when "everything (spoken or) written for edification was supposed to be inspired," some sort of discrimination was necessary, "to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us" (2 Thess. 2: 2). Men could not very well believe every one who claimed to speak and write as he was moved by the Holy Spirit; and by the end of the first century they are specifically directed to "believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4: 1). And the principle of discrimination which John then proceeds to lay down, by which

the spirits are to be tested, is directly anti-Gnostic: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God" (vv. 2, 3). Such a discerning of spirits is, in fact, simply the application of a specified doctrinal test, and that element had been present, in some form, in the "gift" from the beginning.

In early times, too, the Church was conceived of as a body of which Christ was the head and the Holy Spirit the animating and guiding principle. "The Holy Spirit was," as Swete puts it, "the corporate possession of the Church," belonging to individuals, not as individuals but as members of the group, His presence being the evidence of that membership. Consequently, a decision of the Church was not merely the exercise of the prerogative that belongs to any society to determine its own standards: ^{Their} Authority it was the decision of a Spirit-filled group, made under the guidance of the Spirit, and it had, therefore, the authority of the controlling Spirit. "Nowhere else," says Westcott (than in the history of the Christian Scriptures), "can we trace more clearly the silent and unexpected ways in which the Spirit sent in Christ's name works through the Society which is Christ's Body."² The spiritual gift of "the discerning of spirits," in the process of organization, became the possession, not of the single isolated individual, but of the Church of which he was a member, and its sphere was both the spoken and the written word. Hence the authority of the Church was based upon the

²Bible in the Church, Prefatory Notice.

conception of its inspiration. The Church spoke as the vehicle of the Holy Spirit; and the Roman Church, claiming catholicity, claimed thus to speak for the whole Church.³

But, even so, this authority of the Church was not unlimited. Naturally, it could not traverse the authority of Jesus, the source of the inspiration and the Head of the Church, or that of the Apostles, its first great depositories and the founders of the Church. The Church that was "built upon the foundation of the Apostles" could not tear down or repudiate its own foundations. It could not omit from its canon anything that was known, or generally believed, to be Apostolic without impairing its claim to Catholicity; and while it might include non-Apostolic material, if that seemed conformable to Apostolic standards, it could only do so at the risk of impairing its claim to Apostolicity. The Catholic-Apostolic Church must include everything that is Apostolic, and must exclude everything that is not in some sense covered by that designation. It still recognizes differences within the Apostolic material (especially in the Gospels); but these "make no difference to the faith of believers, since the same sovereign Spirit speaks in all of them."

1. The categorical exclusions of the Muratorian are

³One need hardly point out the development of this conception in the Romanist theory of the Church. Congenial to the Romanist mind, and essential to its theory, the conception is full of difficulties for the Protestant, from the days of the Reformation to the present time.

based primarily, if not exclusively, on doctrinal considerations,⁴ and are aimed at the Gnostics and the Montanists. The existence of forged letters of Paul is recognized, but it is their Marcionite content that condemns them: "for gall ought not to be mixed with honey."

Exclusions

2. In its inclusions, the Muratorian follows the general scheme that we have already met with: the New Testament is formed around the two centers, Jesus, and the Apostle—or Apostles. But its treatment of the Apostolic section, both in its enrichment and, especially, in its integration with the evangelic, marks a distinct advance and creates a new and final type of the New Testament.

Inclusions

A. The Gospels. Even before the date of the Muratorian Canon—in the forty years between 150 and 190 A.D.—the fourfold gospel was accepted, as a closed gospel collection, in many (if not all) of the leading Churches. Mention has already been made of Tatian and his Diatessaron, of about 170 A.D. (p. 154). About 180 A.D., Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, wrote a commentary on (a harmony of ?) the four Gospels; and to Irenaeus, about the same time, who, as Bishop of Lyons, represents the far West and, also, "represents the official view at Rome and Ephesus,"⁵ it seems quite impossible, and contrary to

**The Four
Gospels**

⁴"The New Testament Canon represents a dogmatic selection from the literature of primitive Christianity" (Moffatt, *Int.*, p. 9); but the dogma included the apostolic deposit, as standard.

⁵The four-Gospel Canon was probably recognized at Ephesus, as we have seen, even before the middle of the second century.

the very nature of things, that the accepted Gospels should be either more or fewer than just these four. The Muratorian Canon thus does not enunciate a new view, but accepts and confirms a view that was already widely prevalent, arising probably first at Ephesus, the birthplace of the Fourth Gospel, and spreading thence, in the intercourse between the Churches, and backed by the prestige of the Ephesian community, to other circles of believers.

But, in view of the earlier opposition to the Fourth Gospel in Rome, due partly (and see above) to its popularity with the Gnostics and the Montanists, the writer of the Muratorian Canon still feels it necessary to vindicate the addition of this Ephesian Gospel to the earlier Roman Canon of the synoptic three, for this was still something new in Rome.

How he dealt with Matthew and Mark in the process, we do not know, since the lines dealing with those Gospels are lacking; but we may infer that he dealt with them as he did with Luke. Luke's association with Paul is mentioned, and thus he is located among the friends and followers of the Apostles; but it is emphasized that he was not a disciple of Jesus in the flesh nor an eyewitness of the matters that he records: his information was derived from others and set forth to the best of his ability. John, on the other hand, was "one of the disciples" (though he is not called an Apostle), and thus was an eyewitness of what he records; and his Gospel was written at the solicitation of "his fellow disciples and bishops," and, in accordance with a special revelation

Vindication of
the Fourth
Gospel

to the Apostle Andrew, with the supervision and sanction of the whole company. This statement reflects John 21: 24, and issues in the actual assignment of a position of primacy to the Fourth Gospel.

Thus boldly the Fourth Gospel is incorporated with the Synoptics, and received the final and determinative sanction of the Roman Church. From this time on the Gospel Canon has undergone no change. Some of the other Gospels (*e. g.*, the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of Peter, and certain gospels of the Childhood) long survived, and exercised considerable influence in various sections of the Church,⁶ but none of them was regarded as authoritative by the Church or as a possible addition to the accepted Four. That sacred group was closed, and was no longer subject to any conceivable diminution or enlargement.

B. The Apostolic Section. This is now introduced by the Acts of the Apostles, a fact to which Harnack assigns decisive importance.⁷ The description of the book

⁶Hastings, *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, s. v. Apocryphal Gospels. For the Fragments, see M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 1-227.

⁷"The placing of this book in the growing Canon shows evidence of reflection, of conscious purpose, of a strong hand acting with authority; and by such conscious action the ideal Canon, in outline at least, was realized in the form of the bipartite New Testament both Apostolic and Catholic" (*l. c.*, p. 67).

"But if these heroes (Peter and Paul) had found no historian, it is highly probable that, in spite of Marcion, we should have had no New Testament; for in the Catholic Church the combination of the isolated Pauline Epistles with the Gospel would have been an impossibility. Accordingly, St. Luke is really the creator

as "the acts of *all* the Apostles" is anti-Marcionite: it lays down the proposition that the Church will not limit the Apostolic section of its Scriptures to the writings of Paul, but will include all of the authentic Apostolic deposit. The fact that this description is, strictly, inaccurate does not affect its purpose.

Actually, the book of Acts (1) harmonizes ^{The Apostolic Principle} Paul and Peter, whom Marcion set in opposition to one another (with some justification), giving to Paul, both in authority and in activity, a secondary place, and making him quietly subject to the group of Apostolic leaders in Jerusalem (including James, the Lord's brother): (2) in the process, it integrates Paul with the rest of the Apostles, and gives a sanction other than his own claims for his Apostolic authority and ministry: and (3) it makes the Apostolic ministry, thus unified, an integral continuation of "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1). It thus both obliterates the sharp distinction of the Pauline ministry and attaches the Apostolic ministry (mainly of Peter and of Paul) directly and structurally to the ministry of Jesus. Hence it is admirably fitted both to introduce the enlarged Apostolic section of the New Testament and to unite it with the Gospel section, and thus to create a new type of New Testament, a type that came

of the New Testament, and in the same sense the creator of the apostolic, side by side with the evangelic, tradition" (Acts of the Apostles, p. 301). This is too strong a statement, but it rightly emphasizes the structural importance of Acts in the making of the New Testament. Compare the importance that Goodspeed assigns to Acts for the early collection of the Pauline letters (above, p. 165).

to be the standard and that appears in the New Testaments of to-day.

(a) The Muratorian Canon has already attached Luke to Paul, in the discussion of Luke's Gospel. In the brief notice of the Acts, it makes Luke the eye-witness of the events that he records, and thus, as in the case of the Fourth Gospel, makes historical evidence one of the grounds of the sanction of the books; and Acts is, in fact, the only historical work of the first century that deals with the origin and expansion of the Church. But, in spite of its antiquity and the Lukan name, the book has left scarcely any traces in the earlier literature of the Church. Around the end of the second century, however, it comes into great, and rather sudden, prominence; and it was probably its Apostolic content and coördinating function, more than its antiquity, accuracy, and Lukan authorship, that brought it into prominence and caused its incorporation in the Canon.

There were a great many apocryphal books of Acts, some of them quite early. One of these, the Acts of Paul, including the single episode that circulated separately and is known as the Acts of Paul and Thecla⁸ (about 160 A.D.), "seems to have been esteemed all over the Church" (Souter).⁹ It is included in two or three early lists of

⁸Also the letter of the Corinthians to Paul, and Paul's reply, the so-called Third Epistle to the Corinthians. For the remains of these apocryphal Acts, see James, l. c., pp. 228-474.

⁹"The Acts of Paul are not indisputably genuine," says Eusebius of Cæsarea, about 340 A.D.

Acts of Paul New Testament books; and the correspondence between Paul and the Corinthians which it contains, was accepted as canonical, among the Syrian and Armenian Christians and is contained in the old Syriac and Armenian New Testaments (below, *b*). But the Acts of Paul did not displace, in any orthodox circles, our canonical Acts, and was never generally, much less universally, regarded as Scripture. That it should have been so regarded anywhere in orthodox circles is highly illuminating, but it should not obscure the fact that the canonical Acts is the only book of its sort that ever attained universal recognition and sanction in such circles. Its position, and, with this slight limitation, its exclusive position, has been assured and unchallenged since the end of the second century.

(*b*) The Muratorian Canon includes the thirteen Pauline letters whose collection we have already traced.

Pauline Letters The writer feels called upon to assert the universal destination (catholicity) of the letters addressed to the churches, and to justify his inclusion in the Canon of the Church of the personal notes (to Philemon, and the Pastorals). Though the inclusion of the Pastorals marks an advance on the Marcionite and (perhaps) on the earlier Church collection, these thirteen letters were already too well established and too highly esteemed in the Church to need any further explanation; and they have held their undisturbed position in the Canon of the universal Church down to the present time.

There were, also, apocryphal Pauline epistles; but

their number was small.¹⁰ Paul himself seems to refer to the possibility of such forgeries even in his own lifetime (2 Thes. 2: 1; 3: 17); and the Muratorian Canon mentions two, To the Alexandrians, and To the Laodiceans, only to reject them. The surviving letter to the Laodiceans is probably later than the Muratorian Canon; but the Third Epistle to the Corinthians, of which we have already spoken, was earlier. The former occurs in certain English, Irish, and French collections of the Pauline letters (*e.g.*, in Charlemagne's great Bible in the British Museum), and the latter attained definite canonicity in some of the Eastern Churches; but they were never generally received or sanctioned. Their occasional and local inclusion, however interesting and significant it may be, is quite outside the main line of the development of the Canon.

Apocryphal
Letters

But the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews is significant and important. The Muratorian Canon deliberately omits that Epistle, in accordance with the general view of the time in the West; for, though the letter was known and used in Rome from the close of the first century (Clement of Rome), "the statements of all the (Western) Fathers down to the fourth century are opposed to its Pauline authorship,"¹¹ and that naturally prohibited or delayed its acceptance in the Canon.

No Epistle to
the Hebrews

¹⁰See James, l. c., pp. 476-503.

¹¹Bacon, Introduction, p. 140.

And the Muratorian scheme of seven letters to churches allows no place for it.¹²

Thus far the Muratorian Canon presents a very definite, solid, and familiar list of books. We miss the Epistle to the Hebrews; but, aside from that, the books, four Gospels, Acts, and thirteen Pauline epistles, are the same that we have in our own New Testament. From this point on the Muratorian list is, from our present standpoint, very peculiar. The remainder of the New Testament was still fluid, subject to both increase and decrease.

(c) In the section of the non-Pauline epistles, that we call The General, or Catholic, Epistles, the Muratorian Canon includes Jude, "two epistles under the name of John," and the Wisdom of Solomon.

Jude was accepted as Apostolic, and has held its place, though not, in Protestant circles, as the writing of an Apostle, and not without dispute even in the early church (below).

"Two epistles under the name of John" is a puzzling phrase. First John was certainly included in the Muratorian Canon, in connection with the Fourth Gospel, and probably as Apostolic, as it is quoted in maintaining the eyewitness authority of the writer of that Gospel. The two smaller epistles, written by "the Elder" (John), stood on a different footing in the fre-

¹² "Perhaps the author of the fragment thought, as Tertullian did, that Hebrews was written by Barnabas, and he may have not been inclined to put it into the list on that account" (Gregory, Canon, p. 133). But see further below.

quent judgment of the early Church; and we cannot be certain whether the Muratorian intends to include both of them, in addition to the First Epistle, or the First Epistle and only one of the others. If the latter, the omitted Epistle is probably the Third.

The omission of First Peter is peculiar, especially in view of the fact that this Canon was drawn up in Rome and Peter was in high honor in that Church. Its omission is generally (and plausibly) attributed to an oversight or an accident of transmission, since the Epistle is never elsewhere disputed and was already widely received in the Church outside of Rome.¹³ But, conjecture aside, 1 and 2 Peter, James, and (probably) one Epistle of John (the Third?), are absent from the Muratorian. This is of itself sufficient to show
Omissions the vague and indeterminate state of the Catholic group in Rome at the end of the second century.

The strange inclusion of the Wisdom of Solomon both confirms this impression and throws light upon the attitude of the Church to this (and other)
Inclusion apocryphal writing. Though this book "was almost invariably regarded as a divine and prophetic scripture,"¹⁴ its proper place is in the Greek Old Testament and not in the New Testament; but its in-

¹³ Perhaps, also, in Rome (Clement and Justin Martyr?). But the omission may have been deliberate, due to doubt or rejection of the Petrine authorship, or to the favor of the Epistle in Gnostic circles.

¹⁴ Moffatt, Introduction, pp. 26, 27, gives a valuable note on the place and use of this book.

clusion may reflect some evaluation of the Old Testament Apocrypha, and a special interest in this Wisdom as literature of the Church.

(*d*) The Muratorian Canon mentions three Apocalypses, of John, of Peter, and of Hermas (the Shepherd). The last it promptly and sharply excludes from the canonical Scriptures, which may be read aloud to the people in the Church, not because it is without value, for it may be privately read with profit as a work of edification, but because Hermas **Apocalypses** could not be reckoned among the prophets, their number being complete (a reflection of the anti-Montanism of the list), nor among the Apostles, since he wrote quite recently in Rome, and the Apostles were all long dead, and this well-known Hermas could not be identified with the "Apostolic man" of the same name in Romans 16: 14.¹⁵ An Apocalypse to be canonized must be Apostolic, and on this basis the Muratorian Canon recognizes the Apocalypses of John and of Peter, and no others.

Hermas insists on the authority of his work (compare Rev. 22: 18, 19); and its exclusion by the Muratorian Canon traverses a widespread sentiment in the early **Hermas** Church. It is cited as Scripture by some of the most eminent Fathers, Irenaeus, Tertullian (at one stage), Clement of Alexandria, and some others of less note; and the sharpness and explanation of the Muratorian rejection probably reflects, and is designed to correct, some favorable sentiment in the

¹⁵As was done by Origen of Alexandria a little later.

Roman Church itself. The book is included, along with the Apocalypse of Peter, the Acts of Paul, and the Epistle of Barnabas, in the Claromontane list¹⁶ of books of the New Testament (probably of Egyptian origin, about 300 A.D.), and actually finds a place in one of our oldest and most precious Greek Testaments, the Sinaitic, of the fourth century. Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople in the early ninth century, lists it among the apocrypha of the New Testament; and "it maintained its place in many Bibles far down into the Middle Ages."¹⁷

In the case of the Apocalypse of Peter, the Muratorian Canon reckons it as Scripture, though the writer notes that this estimate is not universal in the Roman Church; for "some of our people are unwilling for it to be read in the Church," which means that they did not regard it as canonical Scripture but only, like Hermas, as a book of private edification.

Apocalypse
of Peter

The book is commented on by Clement of Alexandria, is included in the Claromontane list, and is said to have been used in Palestinian churches as late as the fifth century. In the list of Nicephorus it is reck-

¹⁶A list of books of the Bible included in the codex Claromontanus. Origen of Alexandria (died about 250 A.D.), "the greatest Biblical scholar of the ancient world," says of Hermas, "which writing (*scriptura*, in a general sense) seems to me extremely useful and, as I believe, divinely inspired."

¹⁷Moore, *New Testament in the Christian Church*, p. 60. Harnack calls attention to "the attempt made to preserve the book for the Church by attaching it to the Old Testament" (l. c., p. 92). Compare the attachment of Wisdom to the New Testament in the Muratorian Canon, above.

oned, along with the Apocalypse of John, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Gospel according to the Hebrews, among the disputed books of the New Testament. But, despite this high early sanction, specific, though not undisputed, canonicity in Rome about the end of the second century, and despite its Apostolic name, the Apocalypse of Peter went the way of Hermas and ceased to be reckoned anywhere among the Scriptures of the Church.¹⁸ And that, ultimately, for the same reason: its Apostolic authorship was first discredited and then rejected.

Even before the Muratorian, as we have seen, Apocalyptic literature had lost its primitive prestige and become generally discredited in the Church. That Canon itself indicates a lack of hospitality in the Roman Church to this type of literature. The three Apocalypses mentioned were already of such standing as to demand consideration: they constituted an Apocalyptic Canon, but with different bases and different degrees of favor with believers. And the attitude of the Roman Catholic was not to increase, but to reduce, their number. None of them can be any longer accepted on the old and free basis of the intrinsic authority of Christian proph-

Only the Apoc-
alypse of
John, as
Apostolic,
Survived

¹⁸ The relation of the Apocalypse of Peter to our Second Epistle of Peter should be noted. The Apocalypse has the stronger external evidence, and the writings are too much alike to be entirely independent, and too much unlike to be, as Professor Sanday thought, by the same author. They are related; just how, we do not know.

ecy: they must have other credentials for acceptance into the Canon. They must be of Apostolic authorship. *Hermas*, which could not be of Apostolic authorship, and which was least in favor in the Roman Church, was, therefore, decisively excluded from the Canon and reduced to the class of edifying works, approved by the Church for private reading but not for official, public, and authoritative use. Peter and John were maintained in their canonical position purely because they were supposed to be of Apostolic authorship. As the belief in such authorship for the Apocalypse of Peter grew less and less, while the belief in the Apostolicity of the Apocalypse of John maintained itself both against general aversion to Apocalypses and against many doubts of itself, the two parted company, the one to disappear from the Canon, the other to become established in it, the sole accepted representative of the once highly favored apocalyptic literature.

The Muratorian Canon, then, representing the New Testament approved by the Roman Church at the close of the second century, shows:

(1) A New Testament of the same general structure as our own;

(2) A New Testament lacking some books that ours contains, *i.e.*, Hebrews; James, 1 and 2 Peter; and 3 John (?);

(3) A New Testament containing some books that ours lacks, *i.e.*, the Wisdom of Solomon; and the Apocalypse of Peter;

(4) An uncensored difference of opinion in the field of Apocalypses, and traces of differences of opinion

in other fields. In the field of Apocalypses, this difference involves both inclusion (Hermas) and exclusion (Peter, or the whole group?).

In type, but not yet in contents, this is the New Testament with which we are familiar.

CHAPTER XII

THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPLETED—IN CONTENTS

THE modern reader would have a most peculiar feeling if he should, by any chance, buy such a New Testament as the Muratorian Canon has described. He would not have a single flat book. There never was, indeed, any such book; for before the New Testament took that familiar form its contents had come to be quite different from the Muratorian list. He would have a little box or chest containing the separate rolls that the judgment and usage of the Roman Church approved as the Sacred Scriptures of the New Covenant. He would find that the collection of rolls made up a New Testament of the same general type as that with which he is familiar, and he would feel more or less at home in the general principles that the selection expresses. But he would miss some old friends and find one or two strangers; and he would have the uneasy feeling that this could not be the correct New Testament, certainly not the New Testament with which he is familiar.

But this was the New Testament of the most influential ancient Church, and in its content it represents the general condition of the Canon throughout the Church at the close of the second century. There was a collection of books of the New Covenant—the name “New Covenant” or “New Testament” also comes from this period—one part of which was fixed and the

**Fixed and
Fluid Ele-
ments**

other fluid. The fixed part, on which all the Churches were agreed, contained the four Gospels, sometimes in the form of a harmony, but generally separate, Acts, and thirteen letters of Paul. "This collection sprang from the common labor and intercourse of the Churches in the face of heresy and Montanism" (Harnack). It embodied the common and ancient deposit of the great central Churches—books that, more or less, had been publicly read in the churches, side by side with the Old Testament, from earlier times. It was not created by the Roman Church, but grew up in many places, in communication with one another, under the operation of common and widespread causes.¹ But Rome gave this collection the structure with which we are familiar and the sanction that guaranteed its sacredness and perpetuity.

Besides the fixed part of the New Testament on which all believers were now agreed, there was a fluid part in which the widest diversity long continued to prevail. To pass over the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospel of Peter, the Acts of Paul, the Third Epistle to the

¹"Such a far-reaching uniformity of selection during the rapid development of the Canon between the years 140 and 200 would be inexplicable (since it is quite certain that nothing like a compact was made between these later 'men of repute'), if the general conditions had not forced the decision everywhere to follow the same lines, and if the point of view in the matter of canonization had not been the same in one place as in another" (Juelicher, l. c., p. 503). This common factor was the common Christian inheritance as embodied in the books that were publicly read in the churches.

Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Laodiceans, already mentioned, all of which were somewhere, but never universally, received in the Churches, that diversity involved: Hebrews, which the East received and the West rejected; and the whole contents of the General Epistles and the Apocalypses (though 1 Peter, 1 John, and the Revelation of John were widely received). We cannot go into all these matters in detail. It will be sufficient to point out, by way of illustration and confirmation of this statement:

(a) That the Old Syriac New Testament, about contemporary with the Muratorian Canon, contained neither General Epistles nor Apocalypses; and its Gospel was in the form of Tatian's Diatessaron.² The Peshitta, or Vulgate, Syriac New Testament, early in the fifth century, contained only 1 Peter, 1 John, and James, of the General Epistles, and still lacked Revelation, which the West received and the East rejected, and the four minor General Epistles. In accordance with the general usage of the East, the Syriac New Testaments included Hebrews in the Pauline letters.

(b) That Origen of Alexandria, and (after 231) of Cæsarea, recognizes the divided opinion in the Church concerning Hebrews, James, and Jude; and, also, concerning the Epistle of Barnabas, Hermas, and the Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. He does not mention 2 Peter, or 2 and 3 John. Origen's own judgment, as far as that can be determined with certainty, does not issue in a New Testament identical

²For the inclusion of 3 Corinthians, see above, p. 197.

with our own. He regards Hebrews as, in some sense, Pauline, and as canonical, as the Church in Alexandria had generally done since about 160 A.D., but he also places Barnabas among the General Epistles, along with 1 Peter and 1 John, and even calls it a "Catholic Epistle."

Eusebius of Cæsarea, "the father of Church history," who died about 340 A.D., follows Origen quite closely; but he places Revelation (with some ambiguity) in the same class with Hebrews, and the minor General Epistles, as disputed; and he classes the other books that Origen mentions (above), along with the Acts of Paul, and the Apocalypse of Peter, not as disputed but as spurious.

(c) That the Claromontane list, going back to about 300, closes thus: "Epistle of Jude; Epistle of Barnabas; Revelation of John; Acts of the Apostles; Shepherd (of Hermas); Acts of Paul; and Revelation of Peter."

(d) That our oldest extant Greek New Testaments, of the fourth and fifth centuries, contain, in addition to our present books, the Epistle of Barnabas, and Hermas (in the Sinaitic); and the 1 and (so-called) 2 Epistle of Clement, and the Psalms of Solomon (in the Alexandrine). See above, page 135.

It is not until about the close of the fourth century that this fluid condition reaches an approximately final settlement³ and the New Testament appears with just

³"Approximately final," because traces of this condition appear here and there for many centuries, some persisting, though obscurely, even to the present time.

the same contents as our own. And the first list of this sort comes from Alexandria.

Alexandria, whose importance for the formation of the Greek, and, therefore, of the Romish, Old Testament has been already noted, was rising into prominence in the Church at the beginning of the third century and played also an important, if not actually decisive, part in the final delimitation of the Canon of the New Testament. In the days of Clement and of Origen, both the idea and the content of the New Testament were vaguer and more elastic there than they were in Rome. But it was there (in Alexandria), also, after a while, that the lines were first drawn in the area of the uncertain books to mark out a New Testament just the same in content, though not in order, as our own.

Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in his Easter Letter of 367 A.D., is the first to give such a list, and the first, in an earlier writing, to use the word "Canon" of the New Testament collection. In the Easter Letter he lists, as canonical books:

- Athanasius:**
Our New
Testament
- The four Gospels and Acts, in our order;
 - The "seven letters of the apostles, called 'Catholic,'" in our order;
 - The fourteen letters of Paul, in our order except that Hebrews precedes the Pastorals and Philemon;
 - The Revelation of John.

"These are the wells of salvation. . . . In them alone the teaching of true religion is proclaimed: let no one

add anything to them, nor take away anything from them.”⁴

Two other men, both of decisive importance for the formation of the Canon, were born within the lifetime of Athanasius and were both influenced by the teachings of the Alexandrine school. They were Jerome (Eusebius Sofronius Hieronymus), who was born in Dalmatia about 340 A.D., and died in a monastery in Bethlehem in 420, and who shows the influence of Origen (and of Origen’s follower, Eusebius of Cæsarea); and Augustine (Aurelius Augustinus), who was born in Numidia in 354 and died as Bishop of the Numidian city of Hippo, after an episcopate of thirty-five years, in 430 A.D. He shows plainly the influence of his great elder contemporary, Athanasius.

Jerome, and
Augustine

These two men, who, as we have seen, differed in the matter of the contents of the Old Testament, received and sanctioned the same New Testament—that of Athanasius—and “they settled the matter of the number of the books of the New Testament for the orthodox circles in the Western Church so far as there may have lingered in

Their New
Testament

⁴Athanasius goes on: “But for the sake of greater exactness, I add this also, writing as need demands, that there are also other books outside of these, not indeed canonical but written by the fathers to be read by (or, to) those who are just coming forward to be instructed in the word of true religion: The Wisdom of Solomon, and The Wisdom of Sirach, and *Esther*, and Judith, and Tobit, and The Teaching (so-called) of the Apostles, and The Shepherd.”

it here and there doubts as to some of the books.”⁵ Jerome still notes that “very many exclude the Epistle to the Hebrews from the Canon,” but both he and Augustine receive it; and, aside from differences of order, their New Testament is identical with that of Athanasius and with our own.

The Third Council of Carthage (397 A.D.) was largely dominated by Augustine. It decreed that “besides the Canonical Scriptures nothing be read in the Church under the name of divine Scriptures,” and its New Testament is the same as ours, in content though not in order. In the Pauline Letters it still shows a trace of the persistent Western rejection of Hebrews. “Thirteen Epistles of Paul the Apostle,” it says, “and of the same author, one to the Hebrews.” But in the Council of Carthage in 419 even this trace of the distinctive Western attitude has disappeared. It says simply, “fourteen Epistles of Paul the Apostle,” and thus completely accepts the Eastern, specifically, the Alexandrine, position; for it was in Alexandria, about 160 A.D., that Hebrews “first gained a canonical position, (and that) the earliest hint of a Pauline authorship occurs toward

⁵Gregory, I. c., p. 286. But he goes on: “We have not said anything about a determination of the books which belong to the N. T. on the part of a general council of the Christian church. We have said nothing about such a determination, because there never was one. . . . At no period in the history of Christianity did the necessity make itself apparent to the whole Church to say just what was and just what was not scripture.” A surprising statement, but nevertheless true—as we have seen.

the close of the second century.”⁶ “These books,” the Council of 397 goes on to say, “we have received from the fathers to be read in the Church.”

These Councils were not ecumenical, but their decisions, supported as they were by the prestige of Jerome and Augustine, were generally accepted in

Western Canon Settled the West as the official utterance of the Church. Diverse opinions, traces of older conditions, appear here and there for many

years,⁷ but they not only lack official sanction, they are

now measurable by an official and generally accepted

standard. We may, therefore, fairly say that the N. T.

Canon in the West, the Latin Church, centering in

Rome, has been the same as our own from about the

year 400 A.D., and that it reached its final form through

the processes that we have indicated.

In the East, variety of opinion long persisted, and

that in very eminent quarters. The little Council of

Laodicea (363 A.D.) provided that “only canonical

books of the New and the Old Testament are to be read

in the Church.” To this provision a (later) list of “the

canonical books” is added which shows the same New

Testament, in contents, but not in order, as our own,

except that there is no book of Revelation.

Eastern Canon Unsettled Junilius Africanus, in the middle of the

sixth century, reporting lectures heard in

Constantinople, where he was *quaestor sacri*

⁶ Moffatt, Introduction, pp. 432, 433.

⁷ Compare the threat of excommunication in the seventh century Council of Toledo against those priests who still do not receive or preach from the book of Revelation.

palatii, says: "But concerning the Apocalypse of John, there is still doubt in the East"; and notes a distinction between 1 Peter and 1 John and the lesser General Epistles, for "a very great number would add (to the former) five others also." But the question of the Apocalypse is the main and most persistent question in the East, as the question of Hebrews had been in the West.⁸ Though Leontius of Byzantium, about the close of the sixth century, recognizes just the same New Testament as that of the Latin Church (and our own), the list of Nicephorus, more than two centuries later, still reckons Revelation (and Esther in the Old Testament) among the disputed books. This, however, no longer represents the prevailing opinion, which is now, on the whole, in line with the West, though still subject to considerable variation.

But "there was never an authoritative last word spoken in the East. . . . There was no generally acknowledged authority which could have
Still Vague spoken such a word" (Moore, l. c. 186); and we therefore look in vain for any Conciliar Decision that will clearly and finally decide the matter. For the crucial Eastern Council in this matter was the Quinisextine, or Trullan, Council of Constantinople of 692 A.D., of which we have already spoken, and one may fairly say that its decision only adds to the confusion. It ratifies the decision of Laodicea, and the decision of Carthage, and the so-called Apostolic Canons, no two of which agree! And we shall have to leave the matter in that confusion. For while usage

⁸Juelicher, l. c., p. 545.

and intercourse have at last brought about a practical uniformity, "in no one of the Eastern Churches was there any fixed judgment or consistent tradition as to the contents of the Scriptures."⁹

Our own New Testament comes along the Western line to us, Rome—Alexandria—Rome,¹⁰ but its official determination and authority date from the time of the Reformation, and that with a certain surviving vagueness in some Protestant circles.

We have seen how the Renaissance and Reformation affected the Romish Old Testament. The same forces played upon the New Testament, and at first seemed likely to issue in a similar result. For all the ancient questions of the seven disputed books came again into controversy and were dealt with, by a small circle of progressive Romanists and the body of the leading Reformers, with a boldness and freedom that seem irreverent and inconceivable to a later age. Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and others denied the Pauline authorship of Hebrews.¹¹

New Testa-
ment in the
Reformation

⁹ Westcott, *Bible in the Church*, p. 243.

¹⁰ "The Canon of twenty-seven books, as we still have it to-day, is the Canon of the Alexandrian Church of the third (fourth?) century, but its nucleus is the New Testament as it was created about A.D. 200 in Rome" (Harnack, *l. c.*, 113).

¹¹ Its title in the King James' Version (not in the American Revision), "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," is derived from Tindale's New Testament, of which the King James' is a descendant. Tindale modestly thought that Paul was the author, and so printed it (with an explanatory Preface), and it has so remained in English New Testaments down to the American Revision.

It might be, said Luther, by Apollos; but its teaching on the Atonement was false. Zwingli said roundly that Revelation is not Scripture; while to Luther (in 1522) it was "neither prophetic nor apostolic": his spirit "could not acquiesce in it," nor recognize its inspiration; and its teaching on Repentance is not true.

More significant for the possibilities of this situation than these individual opinions, which might be multiplied¹² and are so startling to the Romanized Protestantism of later times, is the actual form of the first printed German and English New Testaments of Luther and of Tindale.

In Luther's German New Testament (1522), Hebrews, James, which Luther regarded as a "right strawy" epistle, both deficient and erroneous in its teachings, Jude, and Revelation, are separated from "the true and certain capital books," and printed at the end of the New Testament; and the numbering of the books in the Index stops at "23," leaving these last four not numbered with the rest.

Tindale's New Testament (1525) follows Luther in this division of the books, but not in Luther's personal estimates of them; and so do the editions of Coverdale (1535), Matthew (1537), and Taverner (1539).

¹² "St. John's Gospel and First Epistle, St. Paul's Epistles, especially to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and the First Epistle of St. Peter, these are the books that teach all that you need know, even if you never see or hear any other book," said Luther in his Preface to the New Testament. But see above, p. 122.

The reader will be reminded of the history of the Old Testament Apocrypha. Here there appears a similar cleavage in the New Testaments of the great Reformers. In the Old Testament, in most Protestant circles, the Apocrypha either remain in a lower rank than the rest of the books or have been entirely removed. But the cleavage in the New Testament had no such definite and permanent effect. In the English line, the distinction was obliterated and the books were restored to their former order in the Great Bible (1539), and the first potential cleavage thenceforth disappears.

The Romanist answer to this disturbing situation, which seemed both to the professional and to the devout Romanist an irreverent and deadly assault upon the Sacred Scriptures and the Church, was the decree of the Council of Trent (1546), *which was, as in the case of the Old Testament, the first ecumenical decision passed upon the subject*.¹³

“The New Testament books are: Four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen Epistles of Paul the Apostle (from Romans through, and including, Hebrews); two of the Apostle Peter; three of the Apostle John; one of the Apostle Jude; and the Apocalypse of John the Apostle.”¹⁴

¹³ Waiving the Council of Florence (1441), Pope Eugenius IV in that year promulgated the same list of canonical books.

¹⁴ Observe the reference of all books but Mark, Luke, and Acts to apostles. The Church itself guarantees the inspiration and accuracy of these three.

“If any one does not receive these books in their entirety, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the old Vulgate Latin edition, as sacred and canonical,¹⁵ and knowingly and deliberately despises the foresaid traditions, let him be anathema.”

After further emphasizing the exclusive authority of the Vulgate Version, the decree goes on: “Moreover, to restrain unruly dispositions (*ingenia*), it decrees that no one, in confidence in his own understanding in matters of faith and morals that pertain to the establishment of Christian doctrine perverting the Sacred Scriptures to his own meanings, shall dare to interpret that Sacred Scripture contrary to that meaning which Holy Mother Church has held and does hold, whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers, even if interpretations of this kind are never at any time to be brought forth into the light. Those who run counter to this decree are to be informed on by the Bishops and punished with the penalties provided by the law.”¹⁶

And that defines and determines the Bible, the Old Testament books having been enumerated before those of the New Testament (above), in its contents, in its Version (text), and in its interpretation, for all good and loyal Catholics.

¹⁵ This covers (“with all their parts”) even sections that the Vulgate contains that are lacking in the best Greek texts (*e. g.*, the last twelve verses of Mark).

¹⁶ See above, pp. 117, 128.

Happily, the decisions of the Protestant Communions were not so specific and so rigid. In the English Church, and the Churches that derive from it, the matter is officially decided in the Sixth Article of Religion (1571):

English
Decision

“In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament *of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church* (italics not in the original). . . .

“All the books of the New Testament *as they are commonly received* (idem) we do receive and account them for Canonical.”

There is no list of the New Testament books, and the decision is thus marked by the “certain surviving vagueness” above mentioned. If one should insist upon the clause, “of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church,” his New Testament would seem very peculiar to the rest of us.¹⁷ But “the books as they are commonly received” is reasonably clear; and in common use all Protestant Churches though by different routes, have reached the same New Testament, and that is also, in book contents, but not in Version and interpretation, the same as the New Testament of the Romish Church. And, for both, the Canon’s true Christian value will be found only as it serves to bring them,

¹⁷ Westcott thinks that this latitude of opinion was intentionally granted to the English clergy (above). The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church are derived from these Anglican Articles and contain the same ambiguity.

loving and beloved, into the presence of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

“Beyond the sacred page we seek thee, Lord;
Our spirits pant for thee, thou Living Word.”

